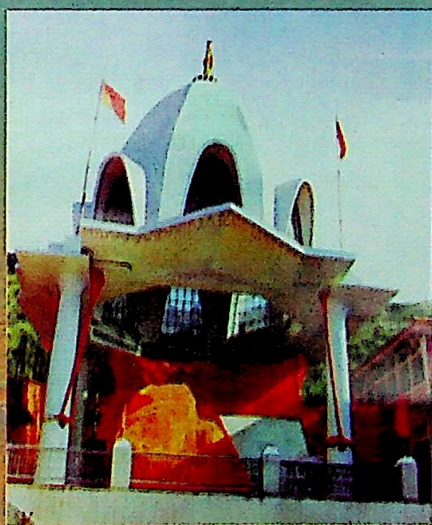


Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantala Jammu

Sharika Parbat Hari Parbat

A SAGA OF ONSLAUGHT,
DESECRATION, ICONOCLASM AND
DESTRUCTION



By

Prof. Mohan Lal Koul

M.A. (English), M.A. (Hindi), M.A. (Sanskrit) B.Ed.

AND

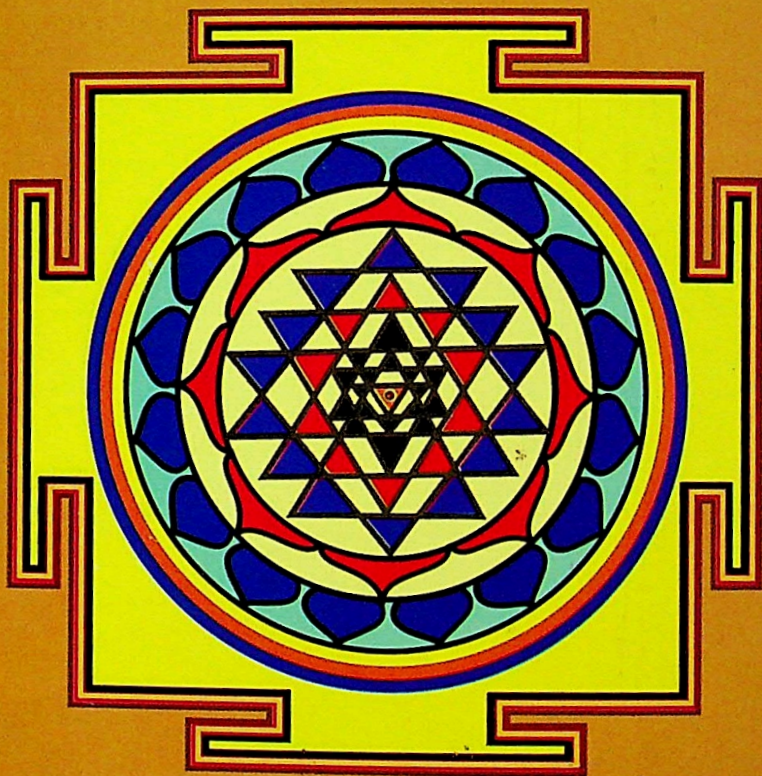
RESERVOIR OF RELIGIO-CULTURAL STRENGTH

Upendra Ambardar

M.A. (English), M.Sc. (Botany), M.A. (Kashmiri)

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श्री-चक्र



Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

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Printed at :

VALLEY PRINTING PRESS

9-JDA SHOPPING COMPLEX, OLD JANIPUR, JAMMU

TELE : 0191-2530011

Mobile : 9419225102, 9419225103

E-mail : vvp1994@gmail.com

PUBLISHED BY :

PRAKASH

**(Promotion of Recent and Ancient
Kashmir Art, Science and History)**

Initiative of Panun Kashmir

ADDRESS :

15/A, SARWAL COLONY, JAMMU-TAWI

PRICE RS. 100/-

पृथ्व्यां यानि तीर्थानि

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

तानि काश्मीर मण्डले ।

काश्मीरे यानि तीर्थानि

तानि वैतस्तिक जले ।।

वितस्ता माहात्म्य

देवि! त्र्यम्बक पत्नी! पार्वती! सती! त्रैलोक्यमाता! शिवे!
शर्वाणि! त्रिपुरे! मृडांनि! वरदे! रूद्राणि! कात्यायिनि!
भीमे! भैरवि! चण्डि! शर्वरि! कले! कालक्षये! शूलिनि!
त्वत्-पाद-प्रणतान-अनन्यमनसः पर्याकुलान् पाहि नः ।

पंचस्तवी

लक्ष्मी-वशीकरण-चूर्ण-सहोदराणि

त्वत्-पाद-पंकजरजांसि चिरं जयन्ति ।

यानि प्रणाम-मिलितानि नृनां ललाटे

लुम्पन्ति दैवलिखितानि दुरक्षराणि

पंचस्तवी

भुवि-पयसि कृशानी मारुते खे शशांके

सवितरि यजमाने प्यष्टधा शक्तिर-एका

वहति कुचभराम्यां या विनम्रापि विश्वं

सकल जननि! सात्त्वं पाहि मां-इत्यवश्यम्

पंचस्तवी

अकुलम् शिव इति उक्तम् कुलम् शक्तिर प्रकीर्तितः ।

कुलाकुल अनुसन्धाने निपुणः कौलिका प्रिये ।।

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श्री शारिकावै नमः

वन्दे शिलातन ईश्वरी,
मेहरे चराचर ईश्वरी,

नूरे जहान सुन्दरी,
माहे अफरोज अखतरी,

सिहमे गज़नफर वाहन अस्त,
लालो-जवाहर दामन अस्त,

वर हर सेह कारण बरतरी,
वर फर खे अन्दर अफसरी,

गरदे राहत कोहले बसर,
सन्गे समीरत खिश्त ज़र,

तू चार देह रत्ने गरान,
तू खाने गौहर शुद्ध अयान,

हर पंजे कारण बयख्त तू,
सर कर दह जेरे ब्रख्त तू,

दीवी जगत माता तुही,
माता पिता भ्राता तुही,

ज़ाहिर तुही बातिन तुही,
अवल तुही आखिर तुही,

जगेरा सर्व सामान तुही,
जिस्मे जहां आरा जान तुही,

श्री शारिका देवी नमः ।

श्री शारिका देवी नमः । १।

ताबिन्दह मेहरे अनवरी ।

श्री शारिका देवी नमः । २।

शिव शाक्ति जेर आहन अस्त ।

श्री शारिका देवी नमः । ३।

दर हर दु आलम सरवरी ।

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हाज़िर तुही नाज़िर तुही ।

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शाहे शहन शाहान तुही ।

श्री शारिका देवी नमः । १०।

लक्ष्मी जहां आरा तुही,
बुद्धी महा विद्या तुही,

Chandigarh Memorial College Of Education, Chandigarh

माया दिशाने अफजा तुही ।
श्री शारिका देवी नमः १९१।

चक्रेश्वरत हाजत रवा,
वाह वाह च लक्ष्मी थापना

साजो गदा रा पादशाह ।
श्री शारिका देवी नमः १९२।

मन अज तु नाडी चक्रमन,
प्राण अज तु प्राणायाम मन,

ध्यान अज जपा मालाये मन ।
श्री शारिका देवी नमः १९३।

मन आरजू यम बे नवाः,
दस्तन बिगीर अज तू दया,

उफतादामे ब दस्त ओ पा ।
श्री शारिका देवी नमः १९४।

ही इष्ट देवी शारिका,
गोयम तुता जोयम दसा,

दास चोन छु भक्त कृष्ण कार ।
श्री शारिका देवी नमः १९५।

GLOSSARY

१	मेहरे चराचर	the all illuminating sun
२	ताबिन्दह महरे अनवरी	the shining sun
३	गजनफर	Lion
४	सरवरी	Control, mastery
५	फरखे अन्दर	in this world
६	खाके दरत	dust of the door
७	सन्नो समीरत	precious stone
८	माहे अफरोज	the fully blossomed
		shining moon
९	गदा	beggar
१०	बेनवा	silent
११	गोयम	saying
१२	जोयम	seeking

1. O Divine Mother! thou hath manifested thyself in the form of the venerated rock spur (at Hari Parbat); thou art the sun that illuminates the entire universe, I bow to thee, Mother Sri Sharika.
2. Divine Mother ! thou art the light of the universe; thou art the shining moon. I bow to thee, Mother Sharika.
3. Mother Sharika! thy mount is the mighty lion. Thou art the Shakti of Lord Shiva. At thy feet lie countless diamonds and rubies, I bow to thee.
4. From every angle, Mother Sharika, thou hath complete control over both worlds. Thou art the Master of us all, I bow to thee.
5. Mother Sharika! the dust particles of thy door giveth me illumination. The stone fragments on thy path leading to thy abode are like the most precious diamonds, I bow to thee.
6. Mother Sharika! thou art a precious jewel. Thou giveth us liberation. Thou art like a mine of pearls. I bow to thee.
7. Thou art the power that controleth this universe. I have ascertained this at thy feet. I bow to thee, Mother Sharika.
8. Mother Sharika! thou art the Shakti of Lord Shiva that hath created this world. thou art my mother, father

brother, etal, I bow to thee.

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9. Divine Mother Sharika! thou art transcendent and immanent, the beginning and the end, I bow to thee.
10. Thou art everything in this universe. thou art the monarch of all monarchs. Thou art my life as also soul. I bow to thee, Mather Sharika.
11. Mother, thou art Lakshmi, the embellishment of this universe. Thou art Maya, knowledge and wisdom, all in one. I bow to thee.
12. The Holy Chakreshwar is the giver of boons where all our needs and requirements are granted. Even the kings stand like beggars, here. This is verily the abode of Lakshmi, I bow to thee, Mother Sharika.
13. Concentrating on the nadi Chakra, I teileth beads of my consciounssness. Thou art the vital force, prana as also my pranayama, I bow to thee, Mother Sharika
14. I am beset with many a problem. I am helpless lying at thy feet. Kindly give me succour, Mother Sharika. I bow to thee.
15. Mother Sharika! thou art my Presiding Deity, I, Krishna Kar, am thy humble servant, singing thy praises and seeking thy compassion, I bow to thee.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, the process of temple demolition and destruction commenced in the wake of entrenchment of Muslim power in 1339 A.D. As a vital agenda of Muslim crusade in Kashmir, a Kubrawi sufi from Hamadan, who had fled his land, though ruled by a Muslim ruler, blue-printed the onslaught on temples by not allowing the Kashmiri Hindus to construct new temples and execute repairs to the dilapidated ones. Zakhirat-ul-Maluk as the principal work of Mir Ali Hamadani establishes him as the progenitor of iconoclasm in Kashmir. Kali Temple in Srinagar was grabbed, dismantled and turned into a Ziarat. For Muslim sultans, foreign sayyids and so-called sufis it became an exemplar, to be followed to dot. The campaign unleashed for destruction and demolition of temples gained furious force and momentum during the sultanate period, which pseudo-historians of Kashmir try to project as golden period of Muslim history in Kashmir.

The pages of Muslim history at global level reveal that conversion and demolition of places of worship of the conquered people were carried out simultaneously under the patronage of Muslim state power. conversion, to the Muslim orthodoxy, remains half-done if the temples of heretics are not destroyed. Temples are a standing symbol and expression of the faith, religion and beliefs of the natives. Hence, they are ordained to be exterminated. The

onslaught on temples in Kashmir has been a persistent and never-ending process. In fact, it is a ceaseless war.

The war against temples as a motif of the faith of natives was unleashed by the kubrawi sayyids. It gained speed and fury during the sultanate period. It assumed horrible dimensions during the chak period. It remained on the agenda of Mughuls and attained new heights during the Afghan period. The sikhs could have reversed the trend, but local leaders, both Hindu and Muslim, who had enabled the sikhs to annex Kashmir, proved a hurdle. The Dogras proved marvellous in archeological renaissance of Kashmir and built many new temples and devised ways and means for their sustenance.

What is baffling the temple demolition and destruction as a Muslim agenda in Kashmir gained more whiffs of oxygen after the installation of a new democratic government in Kashmir in 1947 A.D. A constitution was architected on the noble principles of mutual good-will, co-existence and tolerance of one another's faith and religion. Numerous Muslim formations unheard of pre-1947 A.D. cropped up and disseminated the message of Islamic crusade against the faith of Hindus and their symbols and signs. The governments of all political hues aided and abetted the bigoted arts of laying claims to the temples and their properties. Even cremation grounds and holy springs reinforced by revenue documents as properties of Kashmiri Pandits faced a vigorous onslaught. Records were concocted and tampered

In 1978 A.D. various SRO's issued by the government not only fortified and strengthened the Muslim Aduqaf Act, but also flated the Muslims to grab temple lands without any check or restraint. No fewer than 70 temples and lands attached with them were cruelly grabbed and forcibly confiscated. When revenue records were produced to substantiate the claims over the temples and their lands, they were summarily dismissed. All temples of historical significance were agressed through generation of mob frenzy. The temples of vethavothur, Lok Bhawan, Anantnag, Durganag and Hari Parbat faced serious Muslim onslaught. In sum, temples and their landed properties everywhere in the valley were tangled in disputes.

Nearly one thousand temples and shrines have been desecrated, ravaged, burnt and destroyed in the valley by captain crews of Jihadi forces operating within the territories of Kashmir valley. There are examples galore which can be cited to establish the government involvement in the loot and grab of temple properties. At Khanabarni the temple lands along with their sacred trees which Hindus worship were bulldozed by the officials of a government department. The Kashmiri Pandits raised hue and cry, but to no avail. What happened to siligam shivala is history. It appears that there is a well-calibrated policy to cleanse Kashmir of all vestiges of Hindu faith and to achieve the end-product politicals of all shades work in tandem and have not uttered a word to condemn the Muslim Jihadis and their legions of supporters for their bigoted acts of ravaging and destroying temples.

During the current year of 2014 when Umar Abdullah is the Chief Minister of J&K State the Bhairav Nath Temple at Chattabal, Srinagar was said to be bulldozed by the muslim mob who had already aggressed and confiscated the landed property of the temple. The temple remained closed for 35 years. The legal process had declared the property belonging to the Hindus. But, shamefully no government implemented the court orders. It is reported that the bulldozer was used to flatten the temple in presence of Divisional Commisssoner & Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar. In Kashmir rule of law is a dead letter.

It will be amiss on my part if I do not mention the onslaught and grab of the Shiva Temple at Gulmarg (Gauri Marg). The temple has five kanals of land which have been craftily and illegally grabbed by the tourist corporation of J&K Govt., Muslim managers of a mosque and sikh managers of a gurudwara. It is said that the Gurudwara grabbed a chunk of the land when a sikh tehsildar was in office. As Kashmir for all practical purposes has been allowed to get reduced to a lawless land, any and all muslims are free to act as saviours of Islam if they grab and destroy the temples of heretics.

Lastly I thank Pt. Gokul Dembi for his two sketches describing the plight of the Sharika Parbat.

Mohan Lal Koul

SHARIKA PARBAT

Sharika Parbat, popularly known as Hari Parbat¹, preserves and reminds of the Vedic origins of the Kashmir's prehistoric past and its grandeur and glittering glory. Kalhan Pandit in his magnum opus, Rajtarangini, makes a mention of the Holy hillock as the focal point of Kashmir's well-entrenched and protracted history of spiritualism. As the seat of Vaishnavite thought and credo, the holy hillock is described as 'Pradhuman Peetha'. Mahabharata and numerous other religious scriptures have projected the Sharika Parbat as an embodiment of spirituality and divinity. In the literary works in Sanskrit the authors having Kashmiri origins and invested with aesthetic fertility have depicted the holy hillock in all its inherent picturesqueness and beauty replete with the fragrance of almond blossoms. Jonraj, the author of second Rajtarangini, has given the Parbat the nomenclature of 'Predhuman-Adri²'. Kashmiri Hindus, euphemistically called Kashmiri Pandits, repose an undiluted faith in the divine origins of the hillock and hold it an abode of three crore gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. To them, each rock of the holy hillock is stamped with a

yantra³ of mystical origins impelling every devotee circumambulating the holy parbat to ascend to spiritual destinations of uniting with the creator of everything that exists in the vast cosmos.

Legend

The holy hillock of Sharika Parbat as per the Nilmatpuran and Sharika Mahatamya has a direct linkage with the birth of Kashmir. The mountain girt-Valley of Kashmir is called 'Kashmira' in the Nilmatpuran for the reason that it was built by Prajapati called 'K' and Kashyapa who is also Prajapati. Nilmatpuran relates:-

'O best among the kings, the goddess Uma is the same as Kashmira. What was formerly an enjoyable, heart-encapturing lake for six Manvantras since the beginning of the Kalpa became a beautiful territory in this Manvantra'.

The legend as is unfolded in the Nilmatpuran establishes Kashmir as a vast lake inhabited by a demon called Jalodbhava, who had obtained from god Pitamaha the boons of immortality in water, magical capabilities and exemplary prowess and strength. Invested with such boons the water demon, Jalodbhava, would go berserk and devour human beings of all lands. Simultaneously, Kashyapa, the sage, who was on a holy pilgrimage, chanced to meet Nila, the king of Nagas, who

narrated to him the entire saga of woes and atrocities inflicted on human beings by the vicious demon. To alleviate the unbearable sufferings of the humans Kashyapa alongwith Nila soared up into the eternal world of Brahma and met Vasudeva, Ishwara and Ananta, besides Brahma. To them all Kashyapa related the entire chain of atrocities the Jalodhbhava would frequently subject the humans to. Then, out of mercy, the entire galaxy of gods and goddesses, Hari, Har, Keshava, Agni, Yama, Vayu, Varun, Kubera, Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Devika, Narmada, Gomti committed themselves to a relentless war against the atrocious demon. But, to ward off the onslaught of the gods, the evil-born demon concealed himself in the dark recesses of the lake. As the gods had taken up their positions on the mountain-peaks, Janardana among the gods directed Anant to pierce the Himalaya with the plough. In obedience to his directions Anant broke forth the snow-bound mountain for the lake waters to gush through. To avoid his getting surfaced and killed, the demon harnessed his magical powers to engulf the surroundings with a dense skein of darkness. But, Shiva held up the sun and the moon in his two divine hands, thus allowing the world to light up once again. When darkness vanished, Hari (Visnu) with his magical prowess fought the demon and chopped off his head.

The land of Kashmir was a lake called Satisar, which was six Yojnas long and three Yojnas wide, finds mention in the Nilmatpuran, the 6th century text. The water-demon Jalodbhava as the resident of the lake, is part and parcel of the same legend dilated upon in the same text of Nilmatpuran

As per the Sharika Mahatmya, the legend is that Durga, the Divine Mother, in the incarnation of a merle (Saarika) went to the legendary Sumeru Mountain cliff and fetched a massive boulder from the same mountain and placed it on the hell-gate that would let the demon entry into the underworld. The demon thus trapped had no way for retreat and finally Lord Visnu slew him. The goddess Saarika, the same as Sharika, 'Her' in Kashmiri, took up her perpetual residence on north western side of the holy hillock known as Chakreshwar, Sharikapeeth, Hari Parbat and Pradhyuman peetha.

The oral tradition links the emergence of the entire Valley of Kashmira to the divine act of the Mother Sharika who incarnated in the form of a bird (Saarika) and lifted a pebble in her beak and dropped it exactly at the spot where the water-demon, Jalodbhava, was resting. The pebble assumed massive dimensions and crushed the demon under its heavy weight. It is believed that the pebble to this date survives as the Sharika

Parbat and a depression outside the gate of the Akbar's fort, near the Ganesh-Rock Temple, is the place where the demon forced his way out in the process of struggle to free himself from the crushing weight of the pebble that had swollen into gigantic proportions & size.

Pravarpur :

It is borne out by history of Kashmir that over a protracted period of time the foot-hills of the holy hillock emerged to be the site for the lay-out and growth of a city. Ashoka, the Buddhist emperor, had built Srinagari on the shores of the Vitasta and Pandrethan (puran-Adhishthan), was its capital city. Around 6th Century AD. Pravarasen, II, shifted the capital of the city of Pravarpur, which he had built, to the foot-hills of the holy hillock. In fact, Pravarpur as a city had grown and developed around the same holy hillock. Both Kalhan and Bilhan as historians have made a mention of Pravarpur as the city built by Pravarsen, II, a notable king of Kashmir. It will be quite relevant to say that the present city of Srinagar is the same old Pravarpur as was founded by Pravarsen, II, with all his engineering and executorial skills and expertise.

Temples Around Sharika Parbat :

The city that had emerged around the Parbat was studded with numerous temples and Viharas that had

architectural finesse and aesthetic beauty of exceptional variety.

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Shiva Pravareshwar - It was a majestic temple built by the King Pravarsen, II, in the city of Pravarpur that he had founded. It lies just at a short distance away from the Bhimsvamin rock, popularly known as 'Ganesha, to the Kashmiri Pandits. It was built of stone blocks of huge dimensions. Its height was amazing. The architectonics of the temple structure anticipated the architectural developments that were realized in the Martand Temple built by Lalitaditya in 8th Century A.D. Bilhan and Kalhan Pandit (10 and 11th century historians) have mentioned a legend about Pravarsen, II, that he would 'ascend to heaven from the temple of Pravareshwar'. Bilhan speaks of the temple as 'showing a gap to this day, much like the gate of heaven, through which the King Pravar bodily ascended to the heaven'. Bilhan's statement is corroborated by Kalhan Pandit when he writes that he too observed in the temple of Pravareshwar a gate resembling the gate of heaven. It had a fissured stone roof which was supposed to mark the King's passage to Shiva's abode. It was the earliest specimen of Kashmir's awe-inspiring architectural evolution. Its construction was exceptional and stone-work spoke of the tremendous dexterity of the crafts-people. Stone blocks measuring sixteen feet in length with a width and

thickness amazingly imposing have been found within the premises of the temple by renowned archeologists.

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The temple of Pravareshwar was destroyed by Sultan Sikandar, who was the worst of vandals world has ever known.

Amrit Vihara :

Not only temples, but Viharas also were built around the bewitching environs of the Sharika Parbat. One such Vihara was built by the Queen of Meghavahan at the historical place of Vicharnag. The Vihara had such an architectural style as could be seen in the Buddhist monasteries and Viharas of Gandhara. Meghvahan actually hailed from Gandhara and was invited by the Kashmiris to rule over them.

The said - Vihara was brutally vandalised by the Muslim vandals of foreign brand.

The Locality of Sculptors :

Close to the foot-hills of the holy hillock lies a graveyard popularly known as 'Malakha'. It was an area where Hindu and Buddhist sculptors lived. Sculpting images of gods and goddesses of Hindu and Buddhist pantheon was their age-old profession. They were perfect artists and highly skilful people. Many skilled men of the locality would cut and chizzle stones to a

brilliant finesse for use in building stone temples. Such stones are still known as 'divar stones'. The Malakha area had a good sprinkling of temples and Viharas. A short distance away from the locality is another locality known as Naidyar. It is the distorted form of the 'Naveti Vihara' which was standing there as an architectural marvel. Close by the Malakha locality was a massive temple where pilgrims from various parts of the country would stay for days on end. Shamsuddin Iraqi, who had come to Kashmir all the way from Iraq for proselytisation and destruction of cultural symbols and expressions of natives, destroyed the said-temple with impunity.

The entire locality of sculptors was destroyed when the sculptors stubbornly refused to give up their profession of sculpting images of gods and goddesses and as a compromise formula they were allowed to chisel grave-stones for the dead. The whole area was cruelly turned into a graveyard. The practice of placing stones on the graves of the dead is unique to the muslims of Kashmir only otherwise this practice is not available in any part of the muslim world.

The Temple of Vishnu & Buddhist Vihara :

The imposing Temple of Vishnu was built by a Hindu King in close proximity to the holy hillock. The temple was made of huge blocks of chiseled stone, each

placed on the other in a neat dexterous manner. Built on a massive plinth, it had an exceptional architectural style and construction. Close by the temple was also a Vihara where Buddhists still offer their obeisance.

The temple was vandalized and destroyed by the same infamous vandal called Sultan Sikander. The present-day Jama-Masjid is standing at the site.

Kali Temple :

Not much distance away from the holy Hillock was the Kali Temple⁴ built on the shores of the Vitasta. It was the central-point of religious activities for the Hindus of Kashmir. Besides being a temple it was actually a temple of learning. There was a library having books on religion, aesthetics, theology, medicine architecture, poetics and dramatics. It had a chief librarian who, as a learned person, enjoyed a position of tremendous influence in the spheres of religion and learning. There was a fresh water spring inside the Kali Temple, which has now totally dried up. After its usurpation by a Kubrawi Sufi from Central Asia the Hindus continued to worship the goddess Kali from the river-side till they were expelled from their homes and hearths by the militarised forces of Islam.

Rampart Around the Holy Hillock :

Akbar, (1586-1606 AD) the Mughul emperor, built

an extensive rampart about 5 kms in circumference around the Parbat. Two imposing gates in chiseled stone, Kathi Darwaza⁵ and Sangin Darwaja, were installed at the entrance point called Ganesha Dwar and at the exit point called Chander-Peetham, in old parlance. The Mughuls had evolved their own peculiar style of architecture and the two gates amply testify to it. Later on, the Mughuls converted the whole area within the massive ramparts into a cantonment. Akbar erected a fort at the top of the Hillock for military ends.

Temple Above Maha Ganesha Shrine :

A huge temple existed on the south-western flank just above the Maha Ganesha Shrine. It was destroyed and the Ziarat of Makhdum Sahib was built at the site. Makhdum Sahib was said to be a Naqshbandi Sufi, originally a convert of indigenous origins.

Holy Spots Around Sharika Parbat :

The Hindus of Kashmir hold the entire Hillock as hallowed and holy. Numerous temples and holy spots consecrated to various deities have cropped up at the foot-hills and top of the Hillock. To attain high religious merit the devotees regularly and devotedly circumambulate round the Parbat. The parikrama starts from the shrine of Lord Ganesh situated at the southwestern corner of the Hillock. The diety is

represented by a massive 'shilla " which is smeared with
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thick layers of lead-oxide (Sindoor). The diety is also
worshipped as Ganpati, Vinayak, Lambodara, Ekdant,
Vighnesh, Heramb and Gajanan. Ganesha is believed to
be calm, benevolent, generous and bestower of boons.
Blessings of the Lord are sought after when a religious
ceremony or an auspicious event is given a start. There
has been a long tradition of worshipping Ganesha as a
yantra too.

The next spot of worship and obeisance of the
Parikrama Path is the ' Sapthrashi Sthapana' known as
'Satarush'. The main feature of the spot is a huge,
weather-hewn boulder with numerous pebbles
scattered over it and a Chinar tree. It is a luck-finding
boulder. Devotees randomly pick up pebbles, even
number indicating bad luck and odd number indicating
good luck. Circumambulation round the Chinar is a usual
practice for the devotees. Slow chanting of mantras
helps the devotees to earn religious merit.

Further on the 'sthapana' of the goddess Kali
marked by a small temple by the side of a Chinar tree is
highly revered. The image of the goddess has her hair
plaited into slender strands, giving her face an artistic
look and touch. It has all indigenous features. Kali as the
spouse of Mahakal symbolizes primordial energy and

bestows blessings on devotees and wipes out evil and sin.

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In front of the Kali-sthapana lies a large piece of land known as 'siddha-peeth'. It is at this spot devotees worship the goddess with absolute single-mindedness for bestowal of Shaktipat (grace) and final release. As the spot is hallowed and replete with divine presence the initiated devotees choose pre-dawn hours as the auspicious time for worship of the diety. The highly reputed saints of Kashmir, Pt. Madhav Joo Dhar, Rupa Bhawani, Pt. Krishen Joo Kar, Reshi Peer, and Sahib Koul⁶ have devoutly meditated at the 'sidha-peeth' and attained spiritual heights and renown.

Next on the parikrama path of the Holy Hillock is the vast open land known as Devi-Angan⁷ 'the play-field of the universal mother'. It is dotted with a number of hutments where devotees meditate and chant hymns in praise of the gracious goddess. Because of scenic & charming surroundings Devi-angan is the place where spring festivals as per the Hindu calender are joyfully celebrated. The devotees who cannot ascend upto the holy shrine of Chakreshwari⁸ pray to the goddess at this very blessed spot and seek her blessings. Kashmiri Pandits in thousands would collect at Devi-Angan to

offer prayers to the Mother goddess on Hora Ashtami.

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After marching ahead from Devi-Angan a devotee finds the Sthapana of Hari represented by a rock (Shilla) located on the north-eastern feature of the Holy Hillock. The Shilla is also smeared with layers of red-oxide (Sindoor). A devotee performs pooja at the spot and takes a symbolic 'round-turn' parikrama in front of the "Shilla", pronouncing in loud voice 'Mother bless me'?

Located at a higher elevation near the hallowed Shilla of Hari is the 'Sthapana' of Mahalakshmi⁹, whom devotees bow in absolute devotion and seek her blessings and grace.

Next and quite opposite to Mahalakshmi Sthapana is the temple of 'Amber Koul' on the left-side of the parikrama route. It is wrongly considered to be the first temple in the Valley that is consecrated to Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The devotees meditate and offer pooja to the Lord and then seating themselves on a wooden platform inside the temple they enjoy the enthralling and panoramic view of the back waters of Sureshwari Sar¹⁰, popularly known as Dal Lake.

Moving down the path of parikrama lies the sthapana of Vamdev on the left wing of the route. As per the Mahatyamas Vamdev is the divine consort of the

Goddess Raghnya. There used to be a statue of Lord Vamdev at the spot and also a dharamshala for the meditation and prayers of devotees.

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Pokhribal as the shrine of Mother Raghnya is the next holy spot on the parikrama route. Inside the temple complex there is a holy spring. A 'samput yagnya' is performed in the temple in honour of the goddess Raghnya especially on Shuklapaksh Ashtamis and many other auspicious days.

A small Hanuman Temple situated at the right side of the foot-hills of the holy Parbat is the last holy spot on the parikrama path. The temple has an almond orchard at its back side, thus lending it a background of depth and beauty.

Shrine of Chakreshwari :

In the text of Nilamatpuran the conversation between Gonanda and Brihada'sva explicitly establishes the importance of Chakreshwari, as the matrica peeth¹¹, the seat of Mother goddess. The text reads :-

Chakreshwar Sachandrasham Kashyepesham Vilohitam
Kaamesham Sawasishtais/lam Bootesham Sagneshwaram¹²

The Chakreshwari Shrine is the prime religious and spiritual centre of Kashmiri Hindus. The deity

presides over the entire city and protects it from foe and sin. It is the Shakti-peeth and more than most a Siddha-peeth. The city of Srinagari owes its origin to Shri-Chakra that is engraved on the 'Shilla' smeared with a thick paste of numerous layers of red-oxide (Sindoor), dotted with silver foils and fresh and fragrant flowers of varied hues. There is a flight of steps from Devi-Angan ascending upto the gate of the holy shrine. Numbering hundred and eighteen, the steps are built of chiseled stones.

A spiritual aspirant of the Shakti-cult worships and meditates on an aspect of Shakti that has a symbolic form and nomenclature. The Tantric literature refers to the primordial father as a white dot, Shwait Bindoo and the mother-creatix as a red dot, Shown Bindoo. The mother creatrix is red in colour like that of the sun-set clouds. The sacred places as per the Tantras have sprung up from the chopped-off pieces of Sati's dead body after it was riven and cut by Lord Vishnu, who is the preservator of the world. When Siva in deep sorrow was loitering about Bharat-Desa carrying her dead body, the places where pieces of Sati's dead body fell sprang up as Shakti peethas and there are fifty-two such peethas littered over the whole country.

As per Dr. Sircar, there are only fifty-one Shakti-

peethas. Kashmir is one such shakti-peeth and Chakreshwari Shrine is the exact-spot in Kashmir where Shakti as goddess resides for the spiritual awakening of devotees and if deserving grants them release from the circle of life and death.

As per Abhinavgupta, the dynamic side of the Absolute Reality is para-Shakti and static aspect is Siva. Para-Shakti is paramarsh and static is Prakash. The whole universe as an emanation of Siva is only Vimarsa. A devotee aspiring to achieve spiritual ascension invokes para-Shakti through varied methods, depending upon his psycho-physical tendencies and traits. Chakreshwari atop the holy Hillock in the form of Shilla represents the dynamic aspect of reality.

Sri-Chakra is the diagram of para-Shakti as the presiding deity of the Siddha-Peeth. A verse from the Rudra- Yamal Tantra which is the epitome of the nature of Srichakra stands engraved on the plates of marble adorning the Shilla of Chakreshwari. The verse is :-

बिन्दु त्रिकोण-वसुकोण-दशारयुग्म
मन्वर्च नागदल-संयुत-षोडशारम् ।
वृत्त-त्रिभु पुर-युतं परितर्चतुद्धोः
श्रीचक्रमेतत्-उदितं परदेवतायाः ॥

Tr. - The point, the triangle, the (cluster of) eight

triangles, two (clusters of) ten triangles, the (cluster of) fourteen triangles, the eight petalled lotus, the sixteen petalled lotus, the three circles and the quadrangular ramparts all around form the Sri-Chakra of para-Shakti.

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The order of the verse is evolutionary known as Sriohtikrama in Tantric parlance. When the order of the verse is inverted, it is called Samahara Krama in the same Tantric parlance. The Sriohti Krama underlines how the para-Shakti projects itself in the shape of universe. In the Shaiva language it is the expansion (Umesh) of the deity. The Samahar Krama underpins how a spiritual seeker for final absorption into the ultimate reality of para-Shakti, the same as Shiva, through its identification with the Sri-Chakra. In fact, nine ingredients of the Sri-Chakra as described in the Sloka of Yamala Tantra is a Chakra by itself and have a distinct nomenclature and presiding deity.

In Saundaryalahiri, Shankraacharya describes the Sri-Chakra as under:-

चतुर्भि श्रीकण्ठैः शिवयुवतिभिः पंचभिरपि

प्रभिन्नाभिः शंभोर्नवभिरपि मूलप्रकृतिभिः ।

चतुश्चत्वारिंशद-वसुदल-कलाश्च त्रिवलय-

त्रिरेखाभिः सार्धं तव शरण कोणाः परिणताः । ।

'The triangle of para-Shakti's abode which is composed of nine basic triangles consisting of four distinct Shiva triangles and five distinct Shakti triangles kept away from the former by the Bindu, with the eight petalled lotus, the sixteen petalled lotus with the three circles around and the three lines are counted forty-four (including the Bindu).

As per the Shaiva metaphysics the spiritual journey of a seeker starts from 9th Chakra, the last one, called Trailokymohan and ultimately ends in the first Chakra, called Sarva-anadmya. He gets identified with the Supreme deity after traversing through the seven Chakras in reverse order. In the 8th Chakra, Sarvasaparipurak, the seeker's desires are fully satiated, but he is left discontented and unhappy. In the 7th Chakra, Sarvasamksobha, he feels that he is in agitation, and confusion, but feels urged to embark upon a deep quest. In the 6th Chakra, Sarvasanbhagya, he is graced with divine auspiciousness and has a foreboding that he is about to attain salvation. In the 5th Chakra, Sarvarthasadaka, he gets elevated. In the 4th, 3rd and 2nd Chakras, the seeker feels safe, stable and elevated with success on spiritual path. In the first Chakra, he is one with the para-Shakti, the Supreme Divine consciousness.

The spiritual soyambhu Sri-Chakra represents the goddess Sharika, who has taken up her permanent abode on the western face of the Holy Hillock on a vertical Shilla smeared with red-oxide only to assure the natives of her divine presence and protection. The Sharika Mahatyama records that with a view to saving the natives of Satidesa from evil and ominous deeds of the demon, the Mother Goddess, Ashtadasbhuj, Jagadamba and Durga assumed the form of a bird, myna, 'Her' in Kashmir. It was on the day of Ashad Shukla Paksh Navmi (Har Navum) that the bird took up a celestial pebble in its beak and dropped it on the demon to crush it to death. As the result of a miracle the celestial pebble assumed the form and shape of a hillock called Hari Parbat or Sharika Parbat. Har Navum is one of the auspicious days when Kashmiri Pandits congregate at the Chakreshwari Shrine for devout prayers and worship to seek blessings of the Mother Goddess.

Asad Navmi (Har Navum) as the birthday of the goddess Sharika is also the day for the devotees to offer her 'taher-charvan' - rice boiled with turmeric powder mixed with oil and salt and cooked liver of a goat. The ritual is known as 'Chout Kharun'.

The Sharika Parbat located at the periphery of Srinagari has ancient origins and is the holiest of the

spots in Kashmir. It is the perpetual abode of Mahashakti, the Divine Mother, Jagatamba Sharika Bhagwati, also known to Kashmiri Pandits as Maha Tripursundri or Rajrajeshwari. The Jagatamba has eighteen arms and is the presiding deity of Srinagar city and the entire Valley. She is the incarnation of the goddess Durga, the Divine Mother of the universe. The goddess Sharika is represented by a 'Soyamhu' Sri-Chakra, also known as Maha- Yantra. She continues to be the 'Ishta-Devi' of the citizens of Srinagar city and other places and hamlets of the Valley.

अघोर व्याधिनाशीच घोर दुख निवारिणी ।

अष्टादशभुजा दुर्गा शारिका श्याम सुन्दरी ।।

May eighteen-armed Sharika Bhagwati deliver us from the pain and pangs of life in exile brought about by the lawless lizards armed to the teeth and laced with lethal training at enemy camps for massacre of the devotees of the goddess.

Jai Sharika Bhagwate

TEMPLE DESTRUCTION & SULTAN SINKANDER

The first bacilli of temple destruction were embedded the day when Muslim Sultans of foreign origins in sheer allegiance to a cruel fiat issued by Mir Ali Hamadani, a proselytiser masquerading as a sufi, resorted to the tyrannical measure of stopping Hindus of Kashmir from constructing new temples & executing repairs to the ones in dilapidated condition. Startling records were top-notched in the unholy domain of temple demolition & decimation. The Sultans as blinkered bigots had absolutely no qualms in building mosques & hospices with the materials that were looted from the vandalised temples & shrines. Most of the standing mosques & other muslim shrines in Kashmir retain their old temple plinths of chiselled stones with superstructures imposed & architected the Islamic way. Ruthlessness of the Muslim iconoclasm as its prominent feature put even those temple structures to the hammer of destruction that were world-class embodiments of superb creativity & aesthetic beauty & charm.

Kalhan Pandit, the famed author of Rajtarangini, exalts Kashmir to the status of a tirtha¹³ because of the numerous temple structures that studded the land of Sati, a marvel of her creation. Sultan Sikander looted &

destroyed massively built & aesthetically finessed
temples of Martand, Vijyeshan, Chakrabrat,
Tripureshvar, Sureshvari & Varaha. Writes jonraj in his
second Rajtarangini.

मार्तण्डविजयेशानचक्रभूत त्रिपुरेश्वराः ।
भग्ना येनास्य को विन्ध्यः शेषभंगेन कथ्यते ॥ 601
सुरेश्वरीवराहादि प्रतिमा भंग कर्मणि ।
अकम्पत भियेवोर्वी नास्य सर्वकडषा तु धी ॥ 602

Sultan Sikandar through the instrumentality of State apparatus worked out the destruction of Temples & Hindu Shrines on a scale that has no comparable parallels in the history of iconoclasm throughout the world. The foreign brand of sayyids & so-called sufis straddling his court lauded his anti- Hindu activities, especially of nature iconoclastic, by assigning him the name of butshikan- an idol-breaker.

Jonraj, a fearless historian, draws a graphic picture of Sikandar's iconoclastic activities when he writes :-

There was no city, no town, no village, no wood where temples of gods were left unbroken. The world trembled but not so the mind of the wicked king. He forgot his kingly duties & took delight day & night in breaking images.

न पुरं पत्तनं नापि न ग्रामो न च तद्वनम् ।
यत्र तुरुकषेण सुरागारमशेष्यत् ॥

Putting the Sultan Sikandar in perspective, Jonraj

delineates him as a humble servant of Mir Mohammad Hamadani who initiated him into the zealotry of waging war on Kafirs & non-believers & had credentials of being his virtual slave. Sultan Sikandar imposed Jazia (Poll-Tax) on the Hindu populace in Kashmir, yet he did not grant them peace & safety. "Convert to Islam or flee the land or face death" was the atrocious decree that he issued against the Hindus of Kashmir.

As a despicable model of a religious marauder, Sultan Sikander took punitive action against the Hindus who put a tilak mark on their fore-heads & stopped them from blowing a conch & tolling a bell. No Hindu could cremate his dead. He burnt six maunds of sacred thread (Yagneopavit) after butchering the Hindus. Hindu fairs & festivals were banned. Pilgrimages to Shiva Dhams & other Tirthas were declared as sacrilegious & hence banned¹⁴.

Sultan Sikander & Hari Parbat

Sultan Sikander as the precedent of Muslim cruelty & ruthlessness had extreme hatred against the Hari Parbat. He was out to destroy it as a focal point of Hindu faith. As a metaphor of Hindu spiritualism the crowds of believers as a religious practice circumambulated around the holy hillock. The sultan got the Hindu believers beaten & thrashed through governmental agencies & would not allow them to sing praises of the

Sharika as goddess as described in devotional hymns. The sphinx-like silence of the holy hillock transported him into long bouts of frenzied lunacy. In that state he ordered the destruction of the age-old rocks that had Sri-Chakras divinely inscribed on them. Not satisfied with these pathological acts he got all the temples, small & big, built on the path of parikrama cruelly decimated. As a last act of bigotry he nomenclatured the holy hillock as an epitome of Hindu faith as Koh-i-Maran which sir walter lawrence has translated as "Wicked Hill"¹⁵. This as a vicious nomenclature might have gratified his sick mind as that of a child of Sade.

The nomenclature was immediately picked up by the followers of kubrawi brand of Sufis & other shades of foreign sayyids who gave it a wide currency. This is how Koh-i-Maran as a vile nomenclature for the Sharika-Parabat crept into the Persian chronicles and hagiology. Records baharistan-i-shahi, a persian chronicle, "After his death his body was buried in the well-known garden called Bag-i-Mir veys, an endowment property at the foot of Mulla Parsa near Koh-i-Maran".

Shams-ud-Din Iraqi---a fierce vandaliser

Shams-ud-Din Iraqi was a dreaded crusader from Talish on the shores of caspian sea. He had two stints in Kashmir, one in the times of Hasan Shah & the other during the reign of Mohammad Shah. In Kashmir he was

a highly controversial figure as he subscribed to the faith of Shia-sect of Islam. He was the progenitor of Shia-Sunni strife in Kashmir. He initially lived in the ziarat of Mir Ali Hamadani, originally a Kali Temple which he forcibly occupied & got demolished. Iraqi when exposed as a Shia was thrown out of the ziarat which he had rebuilt because of its ill conceived architectural design. Then he moved to Zadibal where he built a Khanqah with the looted materials from the destructed Hindu Temples & Shrines¹⁶. It is amazing what he could not achieve in his native land he achieved it in Kashmir, of course, under state patronage. When Sunni Muslims threw him out of Kashmir, he hid himself in the neighbouring regions of Kashmir. The Muslim ruler of his native place in Iraq never allowed him entry into his land as he was suspicious of his activities, both religious & political.

Shams-ud-Din Iraqi's mission in Kashmir was to exterminate infidelity to the last dot of it from the land of Kashmir. He pursued the mission ruthlessly. After his exit from Kashmir Nirmal Kanth, a fearless Pandit & a scholar of Vadas, reconverted the converted Hindus to their original faith of Hinduism¹⁷. Kaji Chack as his disciple & Musa Raina as the helmsman of the State invited him back to Kashmir & under their patronage he was ruthless in his conversionary campaigns & demolition of temples. At the instance of the state

agencies one thousand to fifteen hundred Hindus would
be forcibly brought to his doors & he would remove their
sacred threads, make them read kalima, circumcise
them & for final baptism thrust lumps of beef into their
mouths¹⁸. To instil fear into the minds of Hindus he got
prominent eight hundred (800) Kashmiri Hindus,
scholars physicians, theologians, astronomers,
merchants & aesthetes butchered on a day of Ashura.
Shams-ud-Din Iraqi was both a killer & fierce
vandaliser¹⁹.

Demolition & Destruction of Temples of Hari Parbat

Tohfatul-Ahbad is a valuable chronicle written by the son of a disciple of Shams-ud-Din Iraqi. Among many libraries world over a manuscript of the chronicle is available in the library of Agha Sahib of Budgam. A persian speaking Kashmiri Pandit Scholar²⁰ called on him & requested him to make the manuscript available to him for research work. Agha Sahib, a generous man, asked the librarian to give the manuscript to the researcher. But the manuscript was without the portion that catalogues Shams-ud-Din Iraqi's activities describing his temple demolitions. Laudable for the scholar he did not rest at his oars. He contacted a man in Baltistan, a part of J&K state but now under the occupation of Pakistan. The scholar translated the work into English, which is now freely available at sale points.

began his enterprise (of destroying Temples) with the temple at Koh-i-Maran. There existed a big idol Temple on the top of Koh-i-Maran . In Kashmir it was called "Harel Blari." Groups & clans of Hindu infidels, heretics & un-believers circumambulated it. The tradition descended from ancient infidels of the land was that on a day of spring they would assemble here to pray at the idol temples. These people would go up the hillock & offer prayer. They observed the practices & rites of infidelity & polytheism. The people of this land resorted to idolatry & were joined by the sultan, the officials, the nobles, the heretics, the miscreants & the wretched lot²¹."

Festival at Hari Parbat

Records Tohfatul-Ahbab, "A festival was observed during the spring at this place. Musicians, Drum beaters, Singers, Dancers etc. made a big crowd on that day. Many loose women & dancing girls joined them & thus enlivened the assemblies of dance & music. People from all walks of life in the town, merchants & shop-keepers, artisans, labourers & professionals, all came to witness the festivities of dance & music. People from the suburbs, villagers & peasants all subscribing to infidelity & heresy came along to get pleasure from the pageant. Hindus & the corrupt people came to see the prostitutes

Tohfatul-Ahbab furthers the account by conveying, "No means of enjoyment were spared, bouts of drinking & indulging in other corrupt practices. These adulteries dis-allowed by Islamic Law & falling within corrupt morals were conducted openly. The ulema, Qadis & sayyids of this land did not perform their duties because they did not want to displease the Sultan and other administrative officers²³."

Despicable hater of music & other aesthetic expressions, Shams Iraqi, a vandal to his marrow, was over-taken by a fierce fit of anger when he heard the loud peal raised by the beating of drums & other musical instruments. Records Tohfatul-Ahbab, "He ordered a band of sufis & devotees to come to his presence. Taking this group along with him, he came to Koh-i-Maran . Without any fears & apprehensions, he ordered baton-charging of dancing & singing women, musicians & drum-beaters until they disappeared²⁴."

Dilating on the theme of temple destruction, the chronicle conveys, "A prayer house of the infidels existed at the place. Its foundation was dismantled & the idol-house was set on fire till it was fully consumed in flames²⁵."

Petition to Fata Shah

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The Hindus of Srinagar expressed their extreme rage and resentment against the destruction & burning of temple of Sharika by a lawless lizzard called Shams-ud-Din Iraqi & made a petition to the Muslim Sultan, Fata Shah against the savageries of Shams Iraqi. Fata Shah was extremely annoyed & ordered the execution of Shams-ud-Din Iraqi, but his agents of foreign brand persuaded the sultan not to execute Shams Iraqi & not to interfere in his iconoclastic outrages. Brazen as he was, without caring too hoots for the Sultan. Shams Iraqi went up the heights of Koh-i-Maran & destroyed even the smallest remnants of the idol-house & scatterd the pieces of broken idols.

Grave-Yard on the lands of Sharika Parbat

The Sharika Temple had huge chunks of land attached to it as were donated by Parvarsen-II, who had built the city of parvarpura. These lands were known as Agraharas which were over-grown with almond trees & grape-vines. As in Arabia the lands over-grown with date trees belonging to the jews were felled, so in Kashmir the lands belonging to the Hindus having an over-growth of almond trees & other varieties of trees were felled. Shams-ud-Din Iraqi supported by the entire state apparatus turned the whole area into a grave-yard. Felling of trees meant impoverishment of the Brahmans running the affairs of the temple & forcing them to convert

running the affairs of the temple & forcing them to convert to Islam. Turning the lands into a grave-yard was symbolic of permanent grab & loot. The ziarat of Bahu-ud-Din & many other such ziarats, tombs & graves of sufis & muslim ziarats dot the lands that were grabbed & looted from the holy temple of Sharika built on the top of Sharika Parbat²⁶.

Koh-i-maran

All Muslim chronicles have continued to describe Hari Parbat as Koh-i-Maran, coined by Sultan Sikandar with the linguistic aid from foreign Sayyids teeming in his court. The Holy hillock with its massive size, dimension & spread could not be destroyed whole -hog. So he employed an army of religious bigots to break & disfigure the rocks that bore the images of Sri Chakaras with hammers & tongs in a phased manner . The same technique was employed in the destruction of Martand Temple that was studded with gems of sculptures of gods & goddesses.

The ugly name of Koh-i-Maram is now the Muslim name for Hari Parbat hillock that towers over the entire city of Srinagar. Despite its desecration & forcible occupation, the name remains a principal motif of reference to the cultural history of Kashmir. Hari Parbat as Koh-i-Maran in its extended meaning dubs the whole

race of Hindus as wicked & evil. Those who have named it as Koh-i-Maran must thoughtfully ponder over the fact that despite genocide, both physical & cultural, the race of Kashmiri Hindus has survived & has outrightly rejected the invitation given as an alternative to annihilation during genocidal wars. Kashmiri Hindus are the surviving remnants of a civilisation that they live entirely to the chagrin of Jihadis & religious bigots. They have similarities to the Yazidis of Persian civilisation, dying, living, weeping, laughing, running away from killer-fields, bereft of succour & shelter, yet not succumbing.

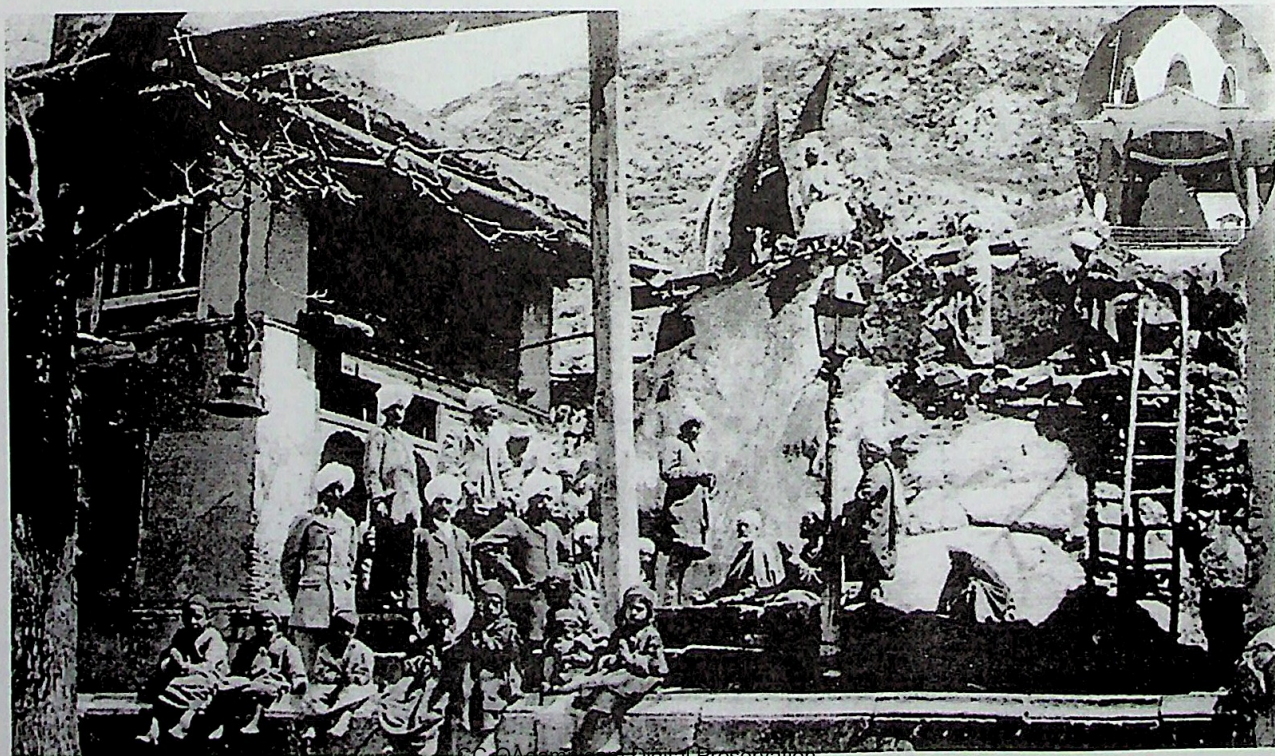
Why Muslims call it Koh-i-Maran

Hari Parbat, originally Sharika Parbat as Kalhan Pandit calls it, nomenclatured as Koh-i-Maran exposes Muslim intolerance & fanaticism but more than these ingredients there is the fundamental factor of "fear, fear & fear" that history of Kashmir has a protracted past that forms the back-drop of six hundred years of Islamic history. Foul usages & derogatory expressions whatever be their form & complexion as couched in Koh-i-Maran cannot decimate the scintillating past of Kashmir. We, for sure, know the Muslim approach to the histories of countries that they have ruthlessly conquered & ruled. Distortions, Arabisation or declaring the past of conquered countries as dark periods (daur-i-zulmat) do

not decimate the past of countries. In an attempt to decimate the past of Kashmir, the neo-literates with religious blinkers on have tried to present the past of Kashmir as dark, nay densely dark, some thing to be totally obliterated. When Sharika Parbat , which I revered & bowed to as my Ishta Devi at day break at my home in Rainawari, is outrageously nomenclatured as Koh-i-Maran, it in no way portrays a loud assertion of Islamic purity, but it overtly reveals a sense of deep fear, yes, morbid fear of encountering the past & also a sense of denial of that past-as a dominant thread in the weave of Kashmiri identity & its total fabric of history. The forcible occupation of Hari Parbat & destruction of its religious sanctity and its entire pristine ecology are absolutely lacking in potential to erase out the religious & cultural lore that centres round the hillock of Hari Parbat. At Hari Parbat chilling horrors of medieval age have been repeated & all collaborative forces unthinkingly try to give it legitimacy. Do such forces know that history will record it as a horror perpetrated on the original natives of Kashmir, as a cultural genocide, a cultural holocaust? A day may come when persons/populations involved in this genocide will be tried on the pattern of Nuremburg Trial. History is ruthless and unforgiving.

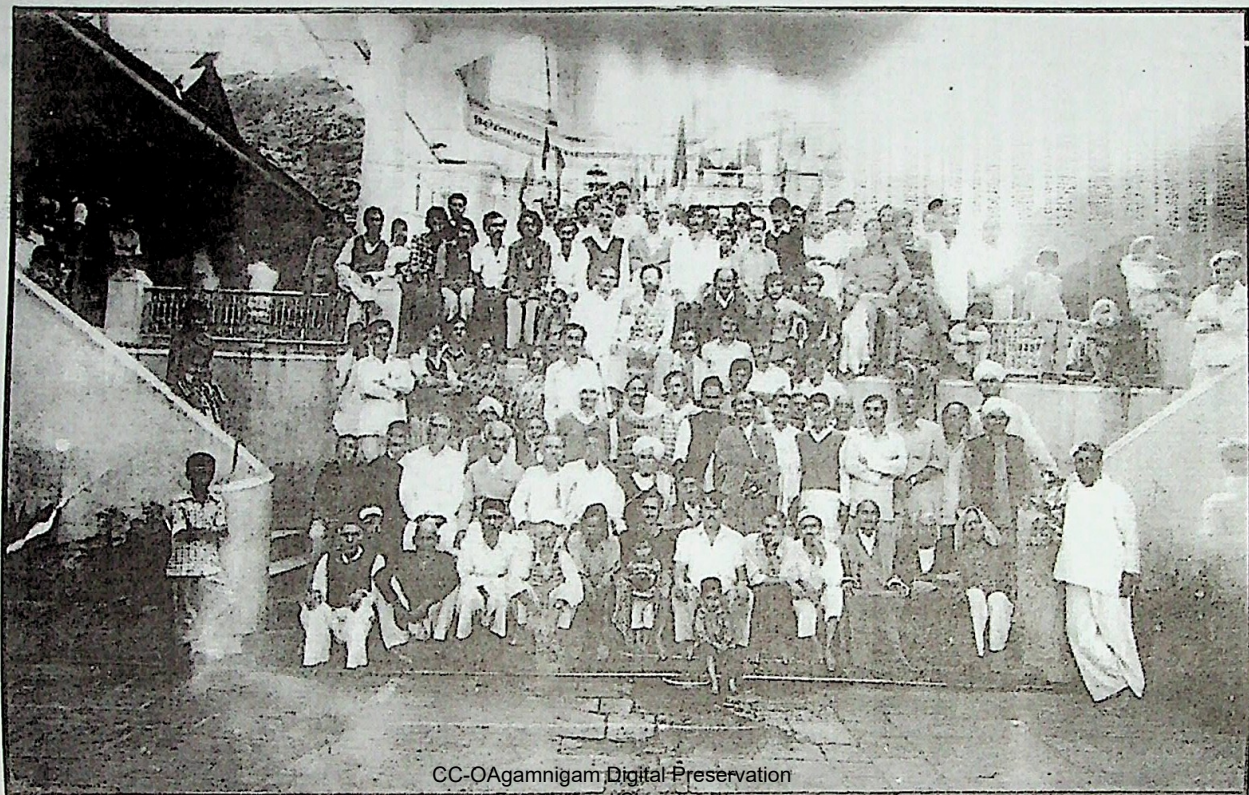
Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalan Jammu

AN ANCIENT PHOTOGRAPH OF SHRI CHAKRESHWARI SHRINE



Gandhi Memorial Library Jammu

**GROUP PHOTOGRAPH OF
SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE SHRINE OF SHREE CHAKRESHWARI**



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ONSLAUGHTON SHARKIKA PARBAT

PRE-1990

Religious fanatics, actually as finished products of seminaries, oriented to destructing & severing the close bonds of Sharika Parbat with religious & cultural narrative of Kashmir launched relentless campaigns of rabid bigotry during the critical period of pre-1990. Towering the city of Srinagar the standing hillock as an ancient seat of worship and reverence would resonate with divine chants in praise of goddess Sharika and tolling bells vibrating the serene environs surrounding the Temple with spiritual ambience. The Muslim Jihadis detested the Temple and the hillock as a manifest expression of infidelity and heresy which required to be exterminated for glory of Islam. To frighten away the Hindu devotees from attending the 'aarti' at the Temple, the police posse guarding the Temple was brutally attacked with sharp-edged weapons, not once, but umpteen times. To generate scare and fright among the devotees regularly circumambulating the holy hillock, the Muslim Jihadis regularly pelted stones at them from vantage points at the heights of the hillock. The idol of Mahakali (1988-89) was stolen from her resting place at the hillock by a band of lawless lizzards and the news

sent shock-waves among the community of Kashmiri Pandits when it was splashed in the local and national print-media. The police launched a thorough probe. The Jihadis as kins of ruling classes were traced out, but to the surprise of all, were not put to rigours of law & were safely let-off.

Wall Could not be Erected

The Chakreshvar Temple at the top of the holy hillock was ably managed by a committee of respectable Kashmiri Pandits²⁸ who were ardent devotees of the goddess Sharika. Sensing the dangers to the Temple lands the committee resolved to enclose the lands at the foot-hills of the Temple. To the utter shock of the Kashmiri Pandit - Community, the Jihadi savages did not allow the walls to be erected. The portions of the walls laboriously raised by the work-men during day-time were found dismantled, lying in a rough heap, next-day morning. The committee members along with hundreds of devotees, all infuriated and acrimonious contacted the Police-Station manning the area. Nothing positive & concrete happened. Pt. Jia Lal Nagari, a prominent member of the committee, brought the lawlessness to the notice of G. M. Sadiq, a minister, with whom he had old political contacts. At his instructions the committee members contacted the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar and narrated the whole situation that was

developing about walling of the Temple lands. Petitions were submitted, not one, but numberless. FIR's were lodged against the known and unknown religious goons. But, the Muslim Jihadis in collaboration with local authorities continued to be hostile and walls could not be erected to safe-guard the Temple lands from grab and confiscation.

Houses of Brahman Priests Pelted

The clusters of houses belonging to the Brahman priests on the foot-hills of chakreshvar Temple were the main butt of attack for Muslim Jihadis. Their brick and mud houses, old types, were regularly pelted during dark nights causing them immense scare, panic and harassment. Families living in the houses were ever kept on tenter-hooks uselessly seeking protection from hostile police and inimical authorities. Many small and collapsing hutments meant for worship of the goddess littering over the nearby fringes of Devi-Angan, the play-field of goddess shrika, were also pelted to scare away the priests and devotees from performing their regular 'puja'. The worshipping materials placed inside the hutments and idols of gods and goddesses meant for worship were pilfered and desecrated. Some hutments were set afire. In Muslim corridors of power and Muslim society as a whole pundits were declared as persona non-grata and 'kafirs at war'

Ancient-badam-wari Felled

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There are credible historical evidences that come in waves to establish that Devi-Angan had emerged over millennia as the aesthetic spot for joyous celebration of verdant spring festivals after the departure of chilly days of winter and snow. Both Hindus and statistical Muslims would throng the spot to view and enjoy the glamour of almond trees clad in pink and white blossoms and breathe in the stunning fragrance repleting the whole ambience. Shockingly, the crude Muslim elements, now in positions of authority after 1947, but inimical to the bonhomie as could be manifestly seen at Badam-Wari, saw to it that it was felled and destroyed as a relic of Hindu past. The whole area was a swathe of almond-trees within the Mughul ramparts and a road passing through it defining its limits as part of Devi-Angan. The Badam Wari was cruelly reduced to a waste land and the felled trees presenting a meshy look that gave it a scenario of a ravaged zone. The wood of the trees was looted by such elements to finesse it into articles of decor to glamourise their palatial houses that they had built with the loot of Indian moneys.

The Badam-Wari as referral in the Nilmatpuran was revengefully converted into a dumping ground for electrical poles, cement pipes and ugly bundles of intertwined wires and foul-smelling garbage. The Bad am-

Wari weaving a spell of magic for painters to paint the festivities of spring, its verdure and freshness had vanished. The songs and lyrics that poets and poetasters would spontaneously pour out got stifled at their throats because that enchanting Badam-Wari as their subject was now a scorched and unaesthetic spot.

The Holy Hillock Wounded

To de-mystify the halo of aura around the holy hillock Water Works department of J&K Govt. under the grip of a Muslim Jihadi got a deep well-shaped trench dug on the spur of the hillock that slopes towards the Amber Koul's Temple. As an act of cowardice it was dug under the cover of darkness. The dug-out materials in the form of rocks and earth were carried away either to fill the Aqaf lands or marshy lands of a novo rich. The gory wound that was inflicted on the holy hillock amply symbolised the Jihadi endeavour to bleed the faith of Hindus who consider the hillock as holy and also among them those who had sensitively poetised its mythological and cultural content for religious and aesthetic effects. All this brutality happened in the times of Sheikh Abdullah who was broadly admired as a shining symbol of Kashmiri brand of secularism. When the moot issue was brought to his personal notice, not by Hindus but by some liberal Muslims, he passed the buck on to Mir Qasim, the Ex-Chief Minister said to be a hard-

core communalist. No constructive attempts were made to rectify the wrong. The wound remained. Post-1990 Muslim insurgency stridently launched by trained Muslim Jihadis laced with lethal arms and weapons used the trench furtively as a dumping place for their weaponry.

A Tibetan Colony built with ulterior motives

With the hegemonic take-over of Tibet by the Chinese troops the Tibetans of all religious hues were forced to pour into India as destitute refugees. Nehru wanted them to be settled at places in consonance with their native habitat. Sheikh Abdullah refused to give shelter to the Buddhist Tibetans, but, agreed to rehabilitate the Tibetans who were Muslims. A colony was built for them within the premises of the holy hillock as part of an offensive strategy to totally Muslimise Kashmir despite the political leadership feigning allegiance to secularism. It was a well-calibrated incursion into the holy hillock with a loud message for the Hindus that they had no exclusive right to the hillock. The Tibetan Muslims as per common sense could have been comfortably settled within the swathes of land attached to Jama Masjid in Srinagar or any other Muslim Ziarat at the top of hillocks or within forests. The Kashmiri Hindus as a vulnerable micro-minority group has been perpetually subject to any conceivable atrocity whether

political or religious. Glancy could not decide the case of handing over of Hari-Parbat to Hindus way back in 1932 A.D. on the false pretext of some graves having been dug up on its peripheries. The Hindu member on the commission explained to him the Muslim trickstery of planting graves on Hindu lands and temples with a view to claiming them as their property. Glancy had imperial interests in view and hence could not afford to be fair and just.

A house built by a muslim opposite to Amber Koul's Temple

One fine morning the Hindu devotees religiously circumambulating the holy hillock were all shocked to find a structure having come upon the brink of the road-side opposite to Amber Koul's Temple. On enquiry it got revealed that a Muslim had built the structure and that too on government land. He was not booked for the illegal act as his sponsors were Muslim politicians or government officials working in tandem with Muslim Jihadies. The Muslim took no time to take up his residence in the hastily built structure. He declared his Jihadi agenda when he started a feud with the Mahant of the temple and brazenly forwarded his claims over the orchard in the back-yards of the Mahant's hut. Meanwhile another structure by a Muslim came up. He too pursued the same calibrated agenda and thus the

temple and its age-old properties got involved into tangles and the brave Mahant went on putting up resistance till 1990 A.D.

Destruction of Vamdev Temple

Not much distance away from Amber Koul's Temple stood the ancient Temple of Vamdev on the left side of the circumambulatory path. It had a dharamshalla also which was ravaged and looted. Doors and windows were spirited away by the looters enjoying government protection. To the shock of devotees the Vamdev idol was plucked out of its resting place and disrespectfully thrown on the road-side. The local Muslims living some distance away contemptuously reduced it to a garbage pit. A zealous group of youngmen from Rainawari took up the challenge to retrieve and safe-guard the Temple from Muslim onslaught. They mounted a guard on the temple, made arrangements for regular pooja and challenged the locals to file suits against them if they ever threw their garbage inside the Temple or outside it. The temple of Vamdev stood till the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 A.D.

Badam-wari near the Jail Premises felled

A verdant chunk of land over-grown with almond trees with pink and white blossoms as pure magic was so enchanting that one would be naturally drawn to the

bewitching patch of land to enjoy a trance or an upliftment of mood in the fragrant environs. To me, it was all through my life a parcel of land inhabited by divine nymphs and fairies. So magical in effect that I would walk the distance from my home at Rainawari, enter the orchard and be an integral part of the whole ambience for hours on end. One day, the Badam-wari was found disappeared and soon it was boorishly converted into a bland play-ground for the Muslim Jihadis who would throng and jack-boot the region of the hillock facing the back waters of the Dal-Lake. They had been across the borders for arms training and had been ordered to be active, agile and trim and maintain their standards of physical fitness. To this end, they would aggressively race over the foot-paths on the hillock. A play-ground was their roaring demand. The collaborative Sheikh was said to have met it and connived with felling of the Badam-Wari.

श्री चक्रोपरिसंस्थितां सुरनतां श्रीराजराजेश्वरी
श्रीविद्याजननीं शिवां त्रिनयनां कारुण्यवारांनिधिम् ।
श्री काश्मीर पुराधिवास निरतां श्री काण्ठचेतोहरां
श्रीवाणीपरिसेवितां पुरहरां वन्दे महादेवताम् ॥

नागराज

Destruction of Hari Parbat Post-1990

Muslim Jihad

It is shell-shocking to see the whole-hog destruction that the Muslim Jihadis and their legions of collaborators have wrought over Sharika Parbat. It is not the same Parbat that Kashmiri Pandit devotees in absolute faith and reverence had circumambulated prior to their expulsion from their native places by the rabid forces of bigotry and 'narrowness of the spirit'. The religious grandeur, pristinity, purity and serenity as the characteristic weaves of the Parbat have totally gone. A professor who visited the Sharika Parbat in 2011 A.D. informed me that 'There is nothing, nothing absolutely nothing that we called Sharika parbat'. The Parbat is aggressed, bruised, scarred and wounded and thus stands defaced and disfigured. The vile wounds of aggression and nasty scars of desecration reveal and stand testimony to the barbarity and viciousness of the crusaders subscribing to the dictum, 'There can be no two religions in Arabia'. The Temples of gods and goddesses that lent an aura of spiritual awe and purity stand destroyed and despoiled. Even the earth of the Parbat that we believed soaked in godliness and divine purity has been excavated and thus defiled and desecrated. The almond trees, their colour and

fragrance, that span the aesthetics of the Parbat have been cruelly felled, thus rendering it desolate and barren.

Sample Survey of Wounds and Scars Traditional Path Of Parikrama Gone

1. The devotees will be shocked to learn that the traditional path of parikrama is no longer there. It was first agressed in the times of Mir Qasim, the congress Chief-Minister when its earth was dug out and was said to be trucked away to fill Auqaf lands. Now , the path has been totally encroached upon by lawless Muslims who have built clusters of houses on and around it. Who allowed such lawless elements to build constructions on a track fringing the foot-hills of the sacred hillock as old as the hillock itself? It was a pedestrian track meant for devotees and all those who loved the ancient lore, myths and legends woven around it. Why have governments of all shades failed to eject them out of their illegal encroachments? Have FIR's been lodged against such fanatics who have ever been keen to grab the lands that have been in the vicinity of Hindu places of worship? As natives of Kashmir the Hindus have an inherent right to know the legal course that Governments have undertaken for removal of such encroachments on and arround the traditional path

of parikrama.

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Temple of Ganesha Burnt

The lawless crusaders along with their myopic supporters have cruelly burnt the Temple of Ganesha, the prime location of worship on the path of parikrama. The sanctum along with its weather-beaten roof and finessed wood-work was consumed in flames. The 'shail' in the form of Ganesha imprinted with a mystical yantra is just a de-spiritualised corner of the hill much in line with a wide road. This was the sacred place where we, the Hindus, solemnly chanted hymns and lyrics in praise of Lord Ganesha, who is extremely benevolent and grants boons to all.

Saptarishi Spot Encroached Upon by a Muslim

In the traditional parikrama path was a holy spot called saptarishi (Satareush). It had a lush green Chinar tree, reverentially called 'parma booni', sacred chinar. A Muslim has grabbed it and constructed a house on the land and has partially chopped off its branches. It had a 'luck stone' which has been broken with hammers and its pieces thrown away with all contempt.

There is no FIR filed against this criminal

Temple of Kali Blasted

Satish Kumar Sharma College of Education Bantalab Jammu

Right above the 'Sata Reush' was the much revered Temple of Kali³⁰ which was brutally blasted by the Muslim bigots. The idol much dear to our hearts was reduced to smithereens. An act of sadism, yet it must have transported the Jihadis and their droves of cohorts into bouts of Joy and gaiety.

No FIR was filed against the Jihadi criminals.

Hutments at Devi-angan Burnt and Destroyed

On the charming and delicate fringes of Devi-Angan stood a number of small huts for worship and meditation. There are no such 'pengi' as those have been set afire and destroyed as symbols of heresy. There is no trace of such huts.

Illegal Constructions on Temple Lands

New Constructions, absolutely illegal, have come up on lands where the houses of pandit-priests stood for ages. These lands are Temple lands and Muslims have encroached upon them. Be it said that temple lands are not saleable. Nor can any person purchase them.

Green Land School Built on Chakreshvari Land

The lands donated by a Kashmiri Pandit devotee to the

Temple of Chakreshwar have been bulldozed and a Muslim has built a school named 'Green Land School' on the said-lands. He has occupied and grabbed the lands without any legal authority. Are the grabber and the law-enforcement authorities on the same page?

A Portion of the Hillock Cut up and Annexed

Some Suhail Jan posing himself as the chairman of 'Green Land School' had the gumption to excavate a portion of the hillock close to the path of parikrama and annexe it to his lands that he has illegally occupied and grabbed. An FIR was lodged against him at Police Station, Nowhatta, Srinagar on 23rd of July, 2011 . It is a crime under an Act on Ecology. No action has been taken against the offender. why?

Slope Below the Sanctum Cut-up

The chakreshwar Temple does exist along with its stairway, but the slope of the sacred Hillock just below the sanctum facing south has been cut up in earth work, thus de-limiting the whole slope.

Devi-angan grabbed and converted into a city

Devi-Angan has been occupied, grabbed and

encroached upon by 'lawless lizzards', stands converted into a housing colony and is a city now. Its freshness, open-ness and spiritual ambience have withered away. The present-day 'but-shikans' as marauders have replicated medieval history in modern times of tolerant democracies.

Shiva Temple Burnt

Shiva Temple near the foot-hills of Chakreshwar Temple on left side of the path of parikrama was cruelly burnt by the Muslim-Marauders wearing the blinkers of open-ended fanaticism and religious hatred.

Shiva Temple Ravaged

On the left-side of arch-gate leading to Hawal stood a Shiva Temple which has been ransacked and destroyed. Eighteen marlas of land attached with it have been grabbed by a law-less Muslim and has built a house on the said-land. The destroyed Temple has been reduced to a garbage bin.

Gosai House Dismantled

The two-storeyed dharamshalla called 'Gosai house' meant for Hermits and Yogis has been dismantled and occupied by a Muslim who has built a massive construction on it.

Amber Koul's Temple Ransacked and Burnt

The Temple has been totally ransacked and burnt³¹. The dharamshalla standing on the left side of the gate of the Temple stands burnt into cinders. On the back-side of the Temple approached through an opening are the temple lands which have been dismally converted into a graveyard.

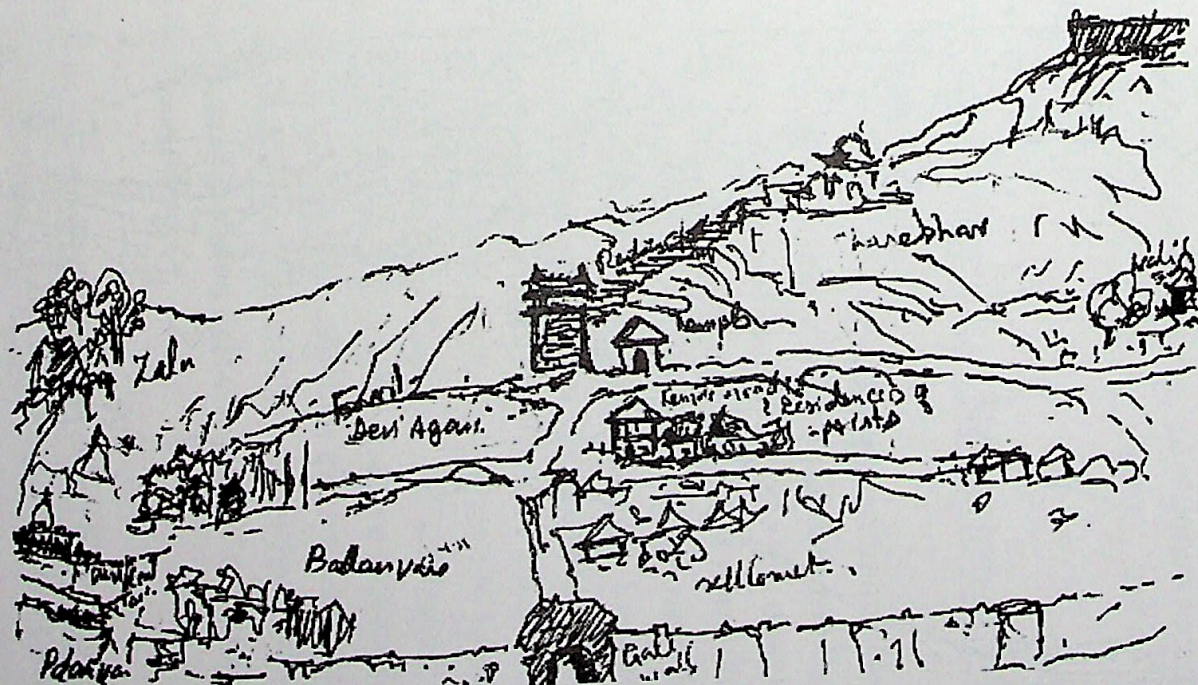
Vamdeva Temple

Almost in ruins the Temple has been hatefully converted into a garbage bin by the local Muslims.

Hanuman Temple Blasted

On the path of parikrama last Temple to stand was that of lord Hanuman. It was burnt and blasted by the Muslim Jihadis. There are no traces of the Temple. The Mahant of the Temple was shot dead. It has 68 kanals of land which have been grabbed by a terrorist turned into a land grabber from sumbal-sonawari. He has been selling the lands to the Muslim buyers at exorbitant rates and thus has amassed huge wealth from the loot and grab of Hindu properties.

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Pantnagar
SHARIKA PARBAT PRIOR TO MUSLIM JIHAD IN 1990 A.D.



SHARIKA PARBAT CONVERTED INTO A LAWLESS CITY
POST 1990 A.D. MUSLIM JIHAD



In response to an RTI application the Revenue Department as a collaborator of Jihadis has informed the applicant that the Temple has no revenue records. It was reported in a Daily, Early Times, issued from Jammu

State Archeological Department and Hari Parbat-hillock

The State Archeological Department as an apologist to Muslim bigotry has nomenclatured the holy Hillock as Koh-i-Maran. The Department in a despicable act has put up two hoardings bearing the nomenclature of Koh-i-Maran at the foot-hills of Chakreshwar Temple and outside Amber Koul's temple on the path of parikrama. The Director of the Department, perhaps a quack, has followed the foot-prints of Sikander 'But-Shikan' and Shams-ud-Din Iraqi who are the two hateful figures in the history of Kashmir. It is advisable for the Director to act within the powers that are well-defined for him. He is nobody to re-christen the ancient names as they are pregnant with coded history and assign them on his own nomenclatures that are replete with derogation and religious pioson.

Stinking Poultry Farms And Ecology³²

The stinking and foul-smelling poultry farms near Kathi-Darwaza within the premises of holy Hillock have

polluted the environs of a sacred place. It never touched the sensibilities of the saviours of ecology who cry foul of pilgrimages to Amarnath, Kounsarnag and Naran-Nag. The morbid destroyers of the ecology of the Hillock could have mercifully allowed the healthful environs of the Hillock to act as a vital lung for the health of Srinagar City that is sunk in smoke and smog, dust and dirt, din and noise. The saviours of ecology are certainly obsessed with the belief that destruction of a Hindu place of worship is a godly act that earns them religious merit.

The muslim supporters of Pakistan launched a bigoted movement against the Amarnath Pilgrimage on the plea that the pilgrims scatter dirt and shit on the mountains of Shri Amarnath. They raised slogans to protect the ecology of Kashmir. But when the holy hillock of Sharika Parbat was dirtied and destroyed, nobody raised any cry or staged a protest. The reason is obvious.

Any place of pilgrimage of Hindus is open to onslaught, aggression and destruction. We, the Hindus, want to know when this ceaseless war on our temples, shrines, and other holy places is going to stop. The Sharika Parbat has been the holiest places of Hindu worship and reverence. It has been ruthlessly destroyed and reduced to a dirty place of those residents who have grabbed the holy spots within the Sharika Parbat.

REFERENCE

1. Sanskrit letter श usually changes to 'ह' in Kashmiri. Hence Sharika Parbat is pronounced as 'Hari Parbat' in Kashmiri language. The legend of Sharika finds an elaborate mention in 'Sharika Mahatamya' and Kalhan's Rajatarangini, tarang III, verses 339-349.
2. Besides Pradhuman-adri, Jonraj in his Rajatarangini gives it another name of 'Sharika-Shail'. Verse, 589 and verse 410.
3. Stein has explained Sri-Cakra and it as a Yantra in his notes on Rajatarangini, Vol-II. Sricakra is a spiritual diagram, which is a mysterious and sacred symbol of shakta-cult representing siva and shakti in cosmic expansion. It contains forty-three ▲s called the body of siva-shakti. The central-point of Sri-Cakra parlanced as 'baindavi-sthan' is known as the home of Siva-Shakti. Sri-Cakra is a Yantra' for worship and includes six psychic centres through which 'kundalini' has its course. There is a bit of difference between the Sri-Cakra of Kaulas and that of samrayacarins. Kaulas use Sri-Cakra as a symbol of worship of Siva-Shakti. The samayacarins meditate on 'Kundalini' to awaken it to get united with shiva. Sri-cakra though acceptable to Kashmir Shaivsim is interpreted as non-dual reality. Siva is both

power and power-holder and any difference stipulated between the two is only to reach out to a layman's mind. Siva and Shakti are indivisible. Shiva's tendency to expand is his Shakti and that is the theme for devotional poets.

4. All Kali temples in Kashmir were ravaged and destroyed by Mir Ali Hamadani and his son Mir Mohammad Hamadani. Kali worship was quite popular in Kashmir and numerous temples had been built to worship her as a form of shakti. When Kali temple at Fateh Kadal, Srinagar was destroyed by Mir Ali Hamadani, the Hindus of Kashmir in the times of Haider Shah revolted and destroyed the Ziarat. To wreak revenge on Hindus Haider Shah unleashed a reign of terror forcing the Hindus to cry and scream, 'I am not a Bhatta, na bhato aham'

To change the history of conquered places, Muslims change the original names of places and replace them by new names having their origins in non-local languages. Mughuls did the same. The old name for Kathidarwaza is 'chander peetham' which was in usage with Kashmiri Muslims till 1990 A.D. Sheikh Abdullah as the Chief Minister of J&K State changed the names of 600 villages in Kashmir.

6. Madhav Joo Dhar was the father and guru of Ropa Bhawani. He was a known saint of his times. Ropa Bhawani, a saint-poetess of form divine has been a house-hold name in Kashmir. Her poetic-out pourings available in a book form have been researched and commented upon by Prof. T. N.

Raina and Dr. T. N. Gangoo. Reshpeer, an eminent saint of Kashmir, climaxed the spiritual climate of Kashmir. Aurangzeb, the Mughul emperor, ordered his arrest and then sought his guidance to calm down his highly disturbed mind as a result of his acts of blood and gore. Sahib Koul was a great shaiva scholar who is yet to be researched.

7. Sharika Devi, a divine form of Shakti, is postulated to play her 'leela'. In fact, the entire cosmos is the expression of shiva's will to witness what lies within Him in a diluted form. This is technically called Shakti and Sharika as amba is the shakti. Devi-Angan is the spot where she would play her leela' or 'kreeda' which connotes the expression and emanation of the whole cosmos. The Hindu gods and goddesses are related to the eco-systems available in our country.
8. Chakreshwari is the most revered shrine where Sri-cakra is divinely engraved on a rock. It is worshipped as a yantra through hymnal mantras. The rock as a result of yantra that is engraved on it is ever-vibrating. When meditated upon it grants release from birth and death. In kashmir shaivism cakreshwar, or chakresh, is one who has controlled and conquered his inner and outer senses through mantras under the guidance of a 'guru'. In Sri-cakra realms of praxis, hrim, krm, aim, srim and kalim are known as spiritual mantras, symbolic in form.
9. Mahalaxmi represents wealth and worldly prosperity. The Kashmiri Hindus as followers of Shaivism have

not rejected world and all that lies in it. 'Bhukhti' and 'Mukhti' is the basic tenet of Kashmir Shaivism. In the pantheon of their gods and goddesses 'Laxmi' too has a pedestal. They seek for her blessings so that they achieve the ultimate goal of self-recognition through the world which is prosperous and delectable.

10. Sureshwari sar is the ancient name of Dal Lake. This nomenclature was prevalent in Kashmir till the times of Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70). Srivar uses the word 'Dal' for the Sureshwari sar for the first time in his second Rajtarangini.
11. Chakreshwari shrine described as matrica peeth is referral to anicent cult of mother-goddess worship. Its roots have been traced to vedas by scholars like Gopinath Kaviraj and Arthur Avalon, eminent scholars of Tantrism. A number of goddesses find a mention in Rgveda. In post-Rgvedic period we get conversed with goddesses like Ambika, Uma, Durga and Kali. Lateron, they get identified with goddesses of sakta cult. In Kashmir mother-goddess is worshipped in the form of Durga, Sharika, Amba, Jawal, Katyayani, Vaghishwari and the places where they are resting are known as Shakti-Peetha or matrica peeths. Matrica peeth that chakreshwar is refers to fecundity of the goddess sharika to emanate the whole cosmos out of her own being.
12. Nilmatpuran, verse
13. चक्रभूत-विजयेशदि केशव-ईशान भूषिते तिलाशोऽपि न यत्रास्ति
पृथ्व्यास्तीर्थे बहिष्कृतः-कल्हण राजतरंगिनी

14. Tarikh-i-Kashmir, Hasan Baharistan, Tr. K. N. Pandita (Dr); The wounded valley, Ajit Bhattacharjee; Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan's History and culture of the Indian people. P. 378

15. Valley of Kashmir, Sir Walter Lawrence

16. Tohfath-ul-Ahbab, Tr. K. N. Pandita (Dr.)

17. Kashmir, Past and Present, Kashmir, Atrocity and Terror-M.L. Koul (Prof.)

18. Tohfath-ul-Ahbab, Tr. K. N. Pandita (Dr.)

19. Baharistan, Tr. K. N. Pandita (Dr.)

20. K. N. Pandita (Dr.)

21. Pages - 211-12

'Harel Blari' is the mis-pronunciation of 'Sharika, Bhattarika', as recorded in Tohfattul-Ahbab. Sharika > Haer in Kashmiri and Bhattarika > braar meaning devi in Kashmiri.

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27. Six thousand seminaries were functioning in Kashmir which prepared the ground for unleashing of Muslim Jihad in Kashmir. Most of the Muslim terrorists belonging to various terrorist outfits were products from the same seminaries. They were in receipt of government grants.

28. Pt. Kashi Nath Koul, Pandit Amar Nath Koul, Pt. Nila Kanth Nor, Pt. Daya Krishen Koul, Pt. T. N. Bhan (Prof.), Pt. Kashi Nath Shorabi, Pt. Kashi Nath Dhar, Omkar Nath Koul (Gasha Ji), Pt. Jia Lal Kaw, Pt. Jia Lal Nagri, Pt. Suman Ji Koul, Pt. Janki Nath Koul

Lal Nagri, Pt. Suman Ji Koul, Pt. Janki Nath Koul
(Thapar), Pt. Niranjan Nath Bhat, Pt. Rakhishwar
Lal.

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29. Nilmatpuran, 6th century work, is a repository of vital information about ancient Kashmir. It was first published and researched by Kanji Lal and Jagadhar Zadoo, professors of sanskrit, S. P. College, Srinagar.
30. Temple of Martand, a gem of Kashmiri style of architecture, was blasted by Sultan Sikander during sultanate period. Numerous temples were blasted by Muslim Jihadis since the unleashment of Muslim Jihad in Kashmir in 1990 A.D. to-date.
31. The 'Leela', a hymn, by the eminent saint of Kashmir Swami Krishna Kar is translated into English by Pt. R. L. Koul (Dr.). His knowledge of Persian and Arabic is laudable. The temple of Amber Koul on the path of parikrama of Sharika Parbat was built by Amber Koul, an ancestor of his family. The Kashmiri Pandits as a community recognise the contribution of Dr. Koul's ancestor to the revival of Hindu faith in Kashmir by raising a temple consecrated to incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Besides being a centre of Shaivism, Kashmir was a seat of Vaishnavism too.
31. The poultry farm within the precincts of holy Hillock was first constructed during the rule of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, Prime Minister of J&K State. A lover of music, he had no qualms to pollute, stench and destroy the beautiful aesthetics of a Hindu place of worship.

As per a survey conducted by Panun Kashmir, a leading organisation of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, the number of temples and shrines desecrated, damaged, burnt and destroyed is no fewer than one thousand. Some of the temples and shrines that have suffered the Jihadi brutality are :-

1. Dashnami Akara, Srinagar
2. Ganpatyar Temple, Srinagar
3. Shiva Temple, Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar
4. Raghu Nath Mandir, Anantnag
5. Gautam Nag Temple, Anantnag
6. Bhairav Nath Temple, Sopore
7. Khirbhawani Mandir, Ganderbal
8. Mattan Temple, Anantnag
9. Gautam Nag Hermitage, Anantnag
10. Three Temples of Lok Bhawan, Anantnag
11. Shailputri Temple, Baramulla
12. Wanpoh Mandir, Anantnag
13. Bhairav Nath Temple, Baramulla
14. Rupabhawani Mandir, Vaskura
15. Ruins of Ancient Temples, Pattan, Baramulla
16. Kanimoji. Gantamulla
17. Hanumat Kund, Kupwara
18. Raja Ram Mountains
19. Khoja Bagh Temple, Baramulla
20. Hanjivera Temple, Pattan, Baramulla
21. Three Temples, Vilagam
22. Shoolara Temple, Budgam
23. Temple at Gushi, Kupwara
24. Temple at Kaloosa, Bandipura
25. Sadamalun Hermitage, Kupwara

26. Temples, Hanand Chawalgam
27. Manzgam Temple, Kulgam
28. Temple, Mirhama
29. Temples Arrh, Kulgam
30. Temple Batsargam, Anantnag
31. Venkara Temple, Baramulla
32. Temple Palhalan, Baramulla
33. Ragnya Temple, Zainpora, Kulgam
34. Brari-Angan Shrine, Anantnag
35. Kulvaghishvari Temple, Kulgam
36. Temple, Ashmuji Kulgam
37. Temple, Divasar, Anantnag
38. Temple, Khanabarni, Kulgam
39. Nari Bharan Temple, Shopian
40. Thakur Dwar Temple, Shopian
41. Kapalmochan Temple, Shopian
42. Kakren Temple, Kulgam
43. Katyayani Temple, Kulgam
44. Vaishakhi Temple, Kharbrari, Kulgam
45. Temple, Bugam, Kulgam
46. Temples, Dhanav, Bogund, Kulgam
47. Prayag Chinar and Temple, Shadipora
48. Seven Temples, Rainawari, Srinagar
49. Vaital Bhairav, Dal lake, Rainawari
50. Balak Pathshahi Temple, Srinagar
51. Temple, Mahnoor, Badgam
52. Temple, Yechekoot, Badgam
53. Temple, Shoolipora, Badgam
54. Temple, Sangrampora, Badgam
55. Ganga Jattan, Badgam
56. Ganesh Temple, Hariparbat, Srinagar
57. Amber Koul's Temple, Hari Parbat, Srinagar
58. Ram Temple, Khankhai Sokhta, Safakadal, Sgr.

59. Rupa Bhawani Asthanpan, Khankhai Sokhta, Sgr.
60. Temple, Drabiyar, Srinagar
61. Katleshvar Temple, Srinagar
62. Raghu Nath Temple, Fateh Kadal, Srinagar
63. Temple, Payar, Pampore
64. Temple, Malmoh, Badgam
65. Swami Gopi Nath Ashram, Kharyar, Srinagar
66. Temple, Karfali Mohalla, Srinagar
67. Pokhribal Temple, Kathidarwaza, Srinagar
68. Reshipeer Temple, Sangrampora, Sopore
69. Kali Mandir, Channakhan, Sopore
70. Temple, Batapora, Sopore
71. Nandkishavar Temple, Seer Jagir, Sopore
72. Karod Tirath, Raj Ghat, Near Chattipadshahi,
Sopore
73. Dooni Mahatma's Temple, Razdan Kocha, Bhana
Mohalla
74. Vaital Bharirav, Motiyar, Rainawari Srinagar

HARI PARBAT

THE RESERVOIR OF RELIGIO-CULTURAL STRENGTH

By : Upinder Ambardar

The pious and sacred places of pilgrimage have deep roots in our socio-religious traditions. They are an integral part of our rich socio-cultural heritage. Kashmir has been a cradle of spiritual and cultural flowering and renaissance since times immemorial. The shrines and holy pilgrimage centres located at every nook and corner of the valley are places of absolute devotion and reverence for the entire community of Kashmiri Pandits. They are not only a perpetual source of our spiritual inspiration but also the main pillar of our faith and devotion.

Hari Parbat (the hill of the Goddess Sharika) situated at the periphery of Srinagar City is one of the holiest places of Kashmir. It is the abode of Mahashakti, the Divine Mother, Jagatamba Sharika Bhagwati, also known as Maha Tripursundhari or Rajrajeshwari locally known as Haari. The eighteen armed goddess Sharika or Ashtadushbuja is regarded as the presiding deity or Ishta Devi of residents living in Srinagar City and near and distant villages and hamlets. The goddess Sharika is regarded as the manifestation of the foremost deity

and Supreme Mother of the Universe, the goddess Durga. The goddess is represented by a 'Soyambhu' Sri-Chakra on the Shila. The alternative names of Sri-Chakra are Mahamaha Srichakra and Mahashriyantra. It consists of spiritual circular and triangular patterns with a dot known as bindhu at its centre. The shri-chakra as engraved on a vertical holy rock (Shila) is located at the middle of the western face of the Hari Parbat hillock.

This very shila thickly smeared with a paste of sindhoor (lead oxide or red lead) and decorated with silver foils (ropa vark) and fresh and variously hued flowers is the holy shrine of chakreshwar. The Shrine can be approached from Devi-Angan by a flight of chiseled stones numbering one hundred and eighteen.

Shri-chakra

The soyambhu Sri-chakra is unique in the whole world. As per a folk belief it is due to Shri-chakra as a goddess that the capital city of Kashmir has derived its name of Srinagar (Shrinagri). The doctrine of 'Vishishtadvaita' postulates that Sri is the Divine consort of the Lord and plays an intermediary role between all powerful God and human soul. The Sri-chakra as per Kashmiri Shaivism is a symbolic representation of the cosmic union of Shiva and Shakti. It is a 'Yantra' too and Yantra is central to the Tantric worship. The Yantra

inscribed with specific mantras represents the Divine Mother, which is the prime cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. These attributes of Shakti are recognised by the great philosopher Adi Shankaracharya.

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The very first line of the first shaloka of his famous work 'Saundarya-lahri' states that Shiva is powerless without the divine energy of shakti. Some of the selected Shaloka's of the 'Saundarya-Lahri', the 'Panchastavi' and the 'Durga Saptashati' written in praise of the universal Divine Mother are recited regularly every morning by the devotees at the holy shrine of the Shri Chakreshwari. The holy shrine of Chakreshwari has been a place of worship from the day the goddess Sharika manifested herself in the form of a 'Shila' on the hillock of the Hari-Parbat. The various names such as 'Pradyuman Peeth', 'Sidha-Peeth' and 'Shakti-Peeth' besides 'Sharika-Peeth' have been assigned to the holy shrine of the goddess Chakreshwari.

Sharika Mahatmya

The devotees often recite a shaloka of the 'Sharika Mahatmya' with faith and reverence during the Circumambulation (parikrama), locally known as 'Prakram' of the entire hillock of the Hari-Parbat. This shaloka clearly refers to the pradyuman-peeth as being the sacred seat of the 'Sri-chakra' on the Hari-Parbat

बीजैः सप्तभिरुज्ज्वलाकृतिरसौ या सप्तसप्तित्यु तिः
सप्तभिर्गणपतयिष्यपञ्चकनयुगलसप्तलोकविहन् ।
काश्मीरप्रवेशमध्य नगरी प्रद्युम्नपीठे स्थिता
देवी सप्तकसंयुता भगवती श्री शारिका पातु नः ॥

A verse from the 'Rudra Yamla Tantra' is also inscribed on the marble slab installed above the holy 'Shila'. This verse speaks about the nature and form of the Shri-chakra, the manifestation of the Supreme goddess Sharika.

बिन्दु त्रिकोण-वसुकोण-दशारयुग्म
मन्वर्च नागदल-संयुत-षोडशारम् ।
वृत्त-त्रिभु पुर-युतं परितर्चतुद्धोः
श्रीचक्रमेतत्-उदितं परदेवतायाः ॥

The 'Shakta Shastra' also admires and glorifies the goddess Sharika as the most adorable and magnificent deity with eighteen arms, who protects the entire Universe including her devotees.

अघोर व्याधिनाशीच घोर दुख निवारिणी।
अष्टादशभुजा दुर्गा शारिका श्याम सुन्दरी॥

Birthday of Sharika Bhagwati

To worship the Supreme goddess, the devotees would go to the Hari Parbat regularly and be at the holy feet of the Divine Mother in the wee hours of the morning. Phalgun Krishna Paksh Ashtami, locally known as Hora Ashtami or Hur Aathum and Ashad Shukla Paksh Saptami, Ashad Shukla Paksh Ashtami and Shukla Paksh Navami, known in Kashmiri as 'Hara Satum', Haara Aathum and 'Haara Navam' respectively

are the auspicious days for the special devotional and congregational prayers at the Sharika-Peeth, Chakreshwar.

Festival of Navreh

On the festival of 'Navreh'. the new year day of the Kashmiri Pandits and during the month of Magh and the Navratra days, known locally as 'Nav-Durga', the devotees regularly visited the holy Hari-Parbat for special prayers and worship.

Celebration of Birth-day of Sharika

In the earlier times, the birthday of the Jagat Amba Sharika Bhagwati used to be celebrated by performing a 'Maha Chandi Yagna', which would commence on Ashad Saptami (Haar Satum) and would conclude on the Ashad Shukla Paksh navami (Haar Navum) with a sacrificial offering of a goat. The ritual was locally known as 'Raza-Kath'. Presently, the 'Haar-Navmi', the holy Birthday of the goddess Sharika is celebrated at the Chakrishwar Shrine with a night-long singing of devotional hymns and bhajans in praise of the goddess and sacrificial offering of 'Taher-Charvan'. Many of the devotees preferred to do parikrama (prakrum) for the complete month of Magh right from the Lord Ganesha's Temple, locally known as 'Ganishun', passing through the Devi-Angan right upto kathi-Darwaza.

Peer Pandit Padshah Resh Peer

Peer Pandit Padshah Resh Peer, one of the greatest saints of Kashmir of the 17th Century, is said to have performed the circumambulation of the entire Hari Parbat Hillock (a distance of about three miles) on his bare knees for forty days in the wee hours of the morning.

Legend

A legend from the 'Sharika Mahatamyā' records that in order to save and free the ancient residents of the Kashmir Valley (Sati Desh) from the evil deeds of the demon, the Mother Goddess Ashtadushbuja Jagatamba Durga took the form of a bird, known in Kashmiri as 'Haar' and 'Myna' in Hindi. On the day of the Ashad Shukla Paksha Navami (Haar Navam), the bird is believed to have carried a celestial pebble from the Mount Meeru in its beak and dropped it on the demon to crush it to death. A miracle happened and the celestial pebble is said to have assumed the shape and form of the present day hillock giving it the name of Sharika Parbat, which is also known by the alternative local name of Hari Parbat.

Subsequently, the goddess Sharika, represented by the spritual 'Soyombhu Sri-chakra', made her permanent abode on the Parbat on a vertical rock (Shila)

in order to assure the native people of Kashmir of her divine presence and protection.

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The Hallowed Hillock

The whole Hillock and the area around it is a hallowed place. A number of temples and holy spots representing different deities are located around the Hari Parbat. It is because of this belief that devotees undertake a circumambulation (parikrama) of the entire hillock of the Hari Parbat without a break. The holy parikrama starts from the Lord Ganesha's shrine called Ganishun, which is located on the south-western corner of the Hari parbat. Inside this temple, the Deity Lord Ganesha is represented by a huge rock (Shila), which is smeared with lead-oxide or red-lead, known as 'Sindhoo'. The Principal devta Ganisha or Adi-deva Ganesha is also known by many other names of Ganapati, Vinayak, Heramba, Ekadenta, Lambodara, Vignesha, Vighna-Har and Gajanana.

Believed to be kind, generous and calm, the Lord Ganesha is always invoked before starting any auspicious event or ceremony. Lord Ganapati is worshipped both in the form of an image and yantra. The holy symbol of 'Swastika' is also regarded as the graphic form of the Lord Ganesha.

Two Parikrama Routes

From the Lord Ganesh Ji's Temple, there are two parikrama routes, one along the foot-hills of the hillock of the Hari Parbat and the other along the fortified stone-wall known locally as 'Kalai'. The devotees have the option of taking to either of the two routes but the sanctified and traditional route is the one along the foot-hills. The devotees usually take to this sacred circumambulatory path. Saptareshi, a place of obeisance on the parikrama route, is the 'Saptarishi Sthapana', which is locally known as 'Satareush'. It is marked by an open space on the slope of the Hillock near a big boulder in the vicinity of a huge chinar tree which is known as param-boien. It is at this very spot that the devotees used to ascertain their luck by random picking-up of some of the rice grains scattered on the boulder, even number taken for bad luck and odd number for good luck. The saptrishis, also known as 'Praja-Patis' are regarded as the mind-born sons or manas-Putras of the Lord Brahma. In the 'Shatpath Brahman, the names are Vishwamitra, Vashista, Kashyap, Atri and Jamad-agni, The seven Rishis are represented in the sky by the seven stars known by the name of the great bear or 'Satareush'.

Kali Sthapana

Further on, the next holy spot to appear during the traditional parikrama route is the sthapana of the goddess Kali. It is marked by a small temple adjacent to

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a chinara tree. Mahakali, the cosmic consort of Mahakal, the eternal time, represents one of the aspects of Shakti, the primordial energy, which creates (Srishti) and assimilates (Vilay) of the whole universe. Kali, the eternal symbol of the mother-cult destroys the evil and showers blessings on her devotees.

Sidda-peeth

In front of the Kali Temple, a large flat chunk of land on the slope of the holy hillock comprising more than ten kanals of land is known by the name of 'Sidda-Peeth'.

It is a sacred place suffused with Divine presence. The Siddha-Peeth is believed to be invested with strong divine spiritual vibrations. Usually, the devotees worship and chant the holy name of the eternal Mother at the Siddh-Peeth during the auspicious pre-dawn hours known locally as Brahma muhurat. The great saints of Kashmir namely Pandit Madhav Joo Dhar, Rup Bhwani, Krishna Kar, Reshi Peer, Sahib Koul and many others are said to have meditated and succeeded in their spiritual pursuits here at the siddha Peeth near the Chinara Tree. The Siddh Peeth also commands a picturesque and panoramic view of the whole area.

Devi-angan

Next on the parikrama route of Hari Parbat is a vast open space known by the name of Devi-Angan. The

Devi-Angan is regarded as the play-field of the cosmic Mother. It was studded with small hutments for the purpose of worship and meditation which no longer exist. Due to its unique scenic charm and enchanting natural beauty, before the forcible expulsion of Kashmiri Pandits, Devi-Angan was a place for religious and socio-cultural festivities. Those of the devotees who would not pay obeisance at the holy shrine of Chakrishwar, would pray and offer worship to the goddess at the Devi-Angan.

Sthapana of Haari

Next holy spot on the parikrama route of the Hari-Parbat is the 'Sthapna' of the goddess Haari. It is represented by a sacred rock (Shila) located on the north eastern face of the hillock opposite to and in the vicinity of Amber Kaul's temple. The shila of Haari is also smeared with sindhoor. A small dharamshalla and a cottage (Kutiya) exist near this sthapana on the backside slope of the hillock. The saints and ascetics used to meditate at this holy spot. The streams of devotees after performing pooja at this spot and paying obeisance take a symbolic 'round-turn' parikrama in front of the shila of Haari, pronouncing loudly "Haari, Majee Kartum Daya". The Mother goddess Haari, be merciful to me. A little below it, the two parkrama routes, one along the fortification wall (kalai) and the other

below the foot-hills merge together into one path. Near the sacred spot of Haari, the devotees while performing the traditional parikrama pay their obeisance to the goddess Mahalakshmi by salutations only, namaskar with folded hands.

Mahalaxmi Sthapana

The Mahalakshmi Sthapana is situated at a higher elevation near the sthapana of 'Haari', The devotees do offer pooja here, even though Kashmiri Pandits have preferential reverence and adoration for the goddess Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and learning rather than Laxmi, the goddess of fortune and wealth.

Amber Koul's Temple

Next and opposite Amber Koul's temple to Mahalakshmi sthanpa, on the left side of the parikrama route, there is a temple called Amber Koul's Mandir, though some people wrongly refer to it as Ram Koul's mandir. Amber Koul's temple is wrongly believed to be the first temple of the Lord Krishna in the present times in the valley. The devotees after performing pooja and meditation would enjoy a panoramic view of the Dal lake, while taking a rest on the wooden platform of the temple facing the eastern side.

Lord Vamdev

Next on the parikrama route falls the sthapana of

'Vamdev', which is located on the left hand side of the holy route. Lord Vamdev is regarded as the Divine consort of the goddess Raghnya. It houses a stone statue of the Lord Vamdev and a small Dharamshalla. The devotees also pay obeisance here and spend hours after 'puja'

Shrine of Pokhribal

Pokhribal, the shrine of the Divine Mother Raghnya, is the next holy spot on the left side of the parikrama route. It has a holy spring inside the temple complex located right on the shores of the pristine lake. A 'samput Yagnya' used to be performed here in honour of the goddess Raghnya especially on Shuklapaksh Ashtamis and other auspicious days.

Hanuman Temple

A small Hanuman Temple located on the right side of the foothill is the last holy spot on the parikrama route. The temple was destroyed during militancy and no trace of it has been left.

Kathi Darwaza

The holy circumambulation or parikrama (Prakrm) of the Hari Parbat ends at the Kathi Darwaza, which is one of the three main gates of the area around Haari Parbat, the other being 'Sangeen Darwaza' towards Hawal side and the third one known as 'Baachi Darwaza' leading

from Nowhatta Chowk.

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The hillock of the Hari Parbat only two decades back was surrounded by the orchards of almonds on its three sides, north, east and west. The almond orchards were known by the native name of "Badam Vari." During spring and especially on Navreh, the "Badam Vari" presented the look of a fairy land and people would visit it to enjoy the almond blossom, known locally as "Badaam Phulai".

A regular visit to the Haari Parbat used to be an integral and inseparable part of the socio-religious life of every Kashmiri Pandit before his forced displacement due to Muslim insurgency. The devotees would flock to the holy shrine with un-failing regularity early in the morning for self-purification, and spiritual pursuits, besides solace and solitude. It is as such rightly believed that those who devoutly worship at the Hari Parbat are deemed to have worshipped three crore gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon and Hindu faith.

Undoubtedly, the whole and entire hillock of the Hari Parbat is the most hallowed place and a source of spiritual, religious and cultural strength. It is the holiest of the holy places of devotion and reverence for the entire Kashmiri Pandit Community even to-day when they are in forced displacement and exile.

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